Polyhedron™

NEWSZINE

SEPT.-OCT.

55

RPGA NETWORK

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Games In A Classroom

Improving Your Skills With Wheeler and Rice

For the past decade John Wheeler and Peter Rice have been helping others become better game masters.

The team's workshops, held at the GEN CON® Game Fair each August, are attended by gamers of all ages and from all over the world. The seminars offer tips on designing campaigns, making encounters suitable to the player characters, constructing castles, and passing out treasure.

Wheeler, a school teacher from Illinois, is a freelance game designer and editor. His writing credits include FASA's *Dr. Who* role playing game. He presently is working with FASA's *Shadowrun* board game.

Rice, an independent games retailer in Maine, conducts sessions for schools and colleges on the topic of games as teaching tools. Rice is the author of *Damned If We Do,* a Renegade Legion novel produced by FASA. He also presents Napoleonics simulations that teach the principles of war at the US Air Force Academy.

Their series of workshops started by accident, Wheeler explains. "I was sitting at MaineCon between events in 1980. Some of the people at the con came and sat down beside me and started asking me questions. Before I realized what was going on, the people outnumbered those playing at a game."

Rice adds, "So we decided if people were interested in having questions answered, well, that was a service we could provide." At that time, both Wheeler and Rice lived in the northeast.

Their first formal workshop series, held at the following MaineCon, was attended by about 30 gamers. There were 10 times that many when they conducted them at GEN CON Game Fair in 1981.

Wheeler and Rice say they instruct game masters that it is okay to make up an adventure as they go along. That is better than restricting the players to a narrow-focused, pre-planned session. The more options the players have, the more fun the game is.

"Our seminars are geared toward fantasy games, but they're general," Wheeler said.

Rice added, "What we say is applicable to all systems."

"And we provide a great many ideas and concepts and tools for the game master and designer," Wheeler said. "Our seminar topics change from time to time. Pete and I are veteran teachers, and we are very active with the people we are talking to. We are able to respond to the interests of the people."

For example, Wheeler said their seminar, "Good, Evil, And The Outside World," has been presented 20 times and never has been the same twice.

To prepare a seminar Wheeler and Rice develop an outline detailing the topics they want to cover. During the seminar they address the topics, expounding on the ones the audience is most interested in. Then, after the convention, they critique their workshops and start to rewrite them for the following year.

"We are always improving our act," Wheeler said.

Because of the number of seminars and workshops they conduct at the Game Fair, Wheeler and Rice can't find time to game at the convention. Still, gaming remains one of their favorite hobbies.

"I got into gaming when I was playing with toy soldiers when I was 9 years old," Rice said. "Then, in about 1978 John got me into fantasy role playing."

"Yes," John recalls. "I dragged him kicking and screaming into my D&D® game." Wheeler and Rice avidly gamed together after that until Wheeler moved to Illinois.

Wheeler said he became interested in gaming when he was asked to be the faculty sponsor of a gaming club in 1975. "I had no idea what I was getting into," he said. "I played a fighter. I took out an entire phalanx of orcs. And I was hooked."

One of the students in that group was Jordan Weisman, FASA president.

The pair still run their own fantasy campaigns. The campaigns cross over on occasion, as Rice's gaming group just missed encountering a group of characters from Wheeler's world.

Rice said, "It gives my players and John's players a sense that there is another world out there that keeps on going. It is an incredibly complex world that seems to have a life of its own."

Wheeler and Rice say they consider themselves entertainers. However, they both claim they don't know how much longer they will continue to present seminars at the Game Fair.

"It's a lot of preparation time and decompression time," Rice said. "We leave the con and say never again, never ever again. But by January we find we're leaning into the harness again." He added that they are hard on themselves if the gamers do not seem responsive to the seminars.

"When the people clap, that's really good. But when they don't we go back and look at the seminar. We want them to stand up and clap," Rice said.

They say one of their best-loved seminars is, "So, You're Going To Carry All Of That?" In it, Wheeler and Rice call a volunteer down front and proceed to have him or her don rope, weapons, and other adventuring gear to simulate that characters aren't capable of carrying as much as their players want them to. Other favorites include, "The DM's Bag Of Tricks," and "Fantasy Castles In The Air."

"We rewrite them all each year," Rice said, adding that they drop the seminars they are bored with.

This GEN CON Game Fair they offered two tracks of seminars — A Game Masters Weekend Workshop and an Advanced GM Workshop. The latter group was for people who had attended the previous year's set of seminars. Their seminars often sell out through preregistration, and their audience is sometimes standing room only.

Rice said they pay more attention to the new seminars they offer. "They have to be as good as the ones we are familiar with doing."

John explained that some seminars involve audience participation, others, such as "And Then You See Six Balrogs," involve number crunching and balancing encounters. "Sometimes we talk nonstop about how to design a campaign," he added.

The audience is the best part of the seminars, the pair agree.

"That's why we do it," Rice said. "When you look up at 8 a.m. Saturday morning and see all those faces, it's a kick. One father said his son got him up at 6 a.m. to get to the seminar. That makes it worth it. We do it for the fun. We do it for the excitement . . . but mostly we do it for the fun."

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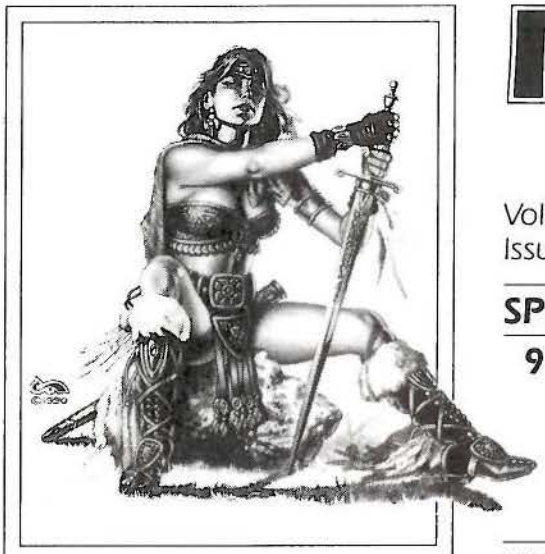

About the Cover

Artist Clyde Caldwell illustrates Kiera, founder of Iron Maidens. The mercenary group is detailed in The New Rogues Gallery.

RPGA™ NETWORK

Publisher
Jack Beuttell

Editor
Jean Rabe

Associate Editor
Skip Williams

Graphic Director
Paul Hanchette

Cartographer
Dave Conant

Production Staff
Angelika Lokotz
Sylvia Deering
Charmaine Reynolds
Nancy Dunivan

Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

Volume 10, Number 5
Issue #55, September, 1990

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Notes From HQ

In Search Of A *Potion of Growth*

Congratulations to Carl Longly of Massachusetts, the winner of this year's membership drive. Carl brought in the most members in our spring drive, and that nets him the prize of an original piece of Jeff Easley art — the cover of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #50.

Second, third, and fourth place winners were Jeff Skilton, Walt Bass, and Carl Buehler, respectively, and they will receive gift certificates to the Mail Order Hobby Shop. Everyone who participated in the drive won, as they were awarded an additional month's membership for each new member they recruited. This drive was much more successful than the one held in 1989. However, only about one hundred members were recruited. We will have another membership drive announced in issue #57. If you have any suggestions for a new drive, let us know soon.

The RPGA™ Network has been growing steadily over the past few years. It is crucial that the Network expand its ranks and become more of a force in the gaming industry. The more members we have, the more we can accomplish. And to get those members, we need your help. Tell your friends about the Network. Don't wait for a drive to help the Network grow.

Sylvia And Eddie

Sylvia Deering has worked for the RPGA Network for the past several years, signing up new members, scoring tournaments, keeping the point system up to date, and performing a number of other duties that help the Network run smoothly. Sylvia is the veteran of the Network staff; she helped me get acclimated to the Network's operation when I was brought on board in the spring of 1987. She has worked in Network HQ at numerous GEN CON® Game Fairs and at the Network's own Winter Fantasy. In short, Sylvia is one of the Network's treasures, and we will miss her. She and her husband Eddie are leaving the chilly climes of Lake Geneva, WI, and heading out West where it only snows on the mountains.

Eddie, a retired auto body shop owner, has been one of the Network's most valuable volunteers during the past two years. He checked over tournament score sheets and assembled membership kits. Because of Eddie's efforts we were able to cut the time in mailing new kits to members.

We wish Sylvia and Eddie well in their new endeavors.

Benefits Of Glathricon

Skip Williams and myself were guests this summer at Glathricon in Evansville, IN. Well over half the convention attendees were RPGA Network members, and the convention held 10 tournaments of Feature, Masters, Benefit, and Grand Masters levels to keep everyone busy.

Among the events were a "Rabe roast" (my hair was only slightly singed by the humorous comments of Network members and convention staffers). The highlight was watching Don Bingle attempt to lead the audience in mimicking my facial expressions.

However, the high point of the convention was the Joe Martin Benefit Tournament and Auction. Those events raised more than $1,000 for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society. That is a considerable amount of money for a convention the size of Glathricon.

Benefit events are a tremendous way for gamers to put the hobby in a good light while at the same time helping an organization. Glathricon was the first gaming convention to feature a regular Network Benefit Tournament. The tournament is to honor Joe Martin, a member of their club who died of cancer.

Other conventions have adopted benefit events. At this GEN CON Game Fair the Network's benefit tournament will be for the Okada Hearing Dog Program. We also will run a benefit tournament at Winter Fantasy in January.

Council Of Five Nations in New York has taken benefit tournaments one step further. All the Network events at their October convention will be benefit tournaments.

A benefit tournament is one in which all proceeds from the event are given to a designated charity. If you want more information on running a benefit event, contact Network HQ.

A Monstrous Contest

This month's contest is to design a monster for the AD&D® game. It is essential that you follow the contest rules. To begin, look at one of the recent Monstrous Compendiums — or the three SPELLJAMMER® setting monsters that appear in this issue — and use that format. Monster statistics **must** be listed in the order they appear in the compendium. Make sure all entries are typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be easily read.

In addition to the monster statistics, include information such as background, combat techniques, habitat/society, and ecology. This information should be set on a 65-space line and should run between 80 and 100 lines. Remember, this material is in addition to the monster statistics.

Pay attention to grammar, spelling, and presentation. These things are important when you are trying to get your good ideas across.

There are three categories. Animals include creatures that you can find in present-day society, such as elephants, wolves, birds, etc. It also includes prehistoric animals, animals which are unusually or large or small — such as a giant otter or a minimal lion, and animals that are common creatures with a little something extra — such as a blink dog, stench cow, or a displacer cat.

Plants include any monster you can develop which is a plant — such as a violent flower, a curious vegetable, or a studious bush.

Monsters include creatures that don't fit into either one of the above categories. A troll, for example, is most definitely a monster. So is a red dragon, imp, fire giant, gray ooze, remorhaz, etc.

Originality is important. Don't give us a giant skunk, as one already appears in the Monstrous Compendium.

All entries will be treated as submissions to the Newszine. Include a disclosure form with your entries. We will publish the best entries in the Newszine.

The Prizes: Three prizes will be awarded in each category. First place is the original piece of art that will be drawn for the winning monster, animal, or plant. Second place will be a six-month extension of your membership. Third place will be a three-month extension.

The Deadline: All entries must be postmarked by November 30.

Take Care,

Jean

Letters

Foreign Affairs

I am an enthusiatic adventurer and consequently a member of the RPGA® Network. I enjoy being in the world's greatest role-playing organization.

After reading *Notes From HQ* in issue 51, where members were invited to express their opinions about the Network, I decided to don the glasses of criticism and take a look.

What have I gained from being a member? The answer, in part, slides into my mailbox every two months. POLYHEDRON® Newszine is one of the prime benefits of being in the Network. You say so yourself. For those of us situated in far-away places, like Iceland, the Newszine is a window that lets us view the role-playing world. The Newszine is a great benefit, but we pay for membership, not subscription to a magazine. The discount at the Mail Order Hobby Shop is great, too, but neither of these two benefits gives the real sensation of being a member in an association.

I want more action. I get frustrated when I look at my membership card and read my player and judge ratings — zero in both areas. I can't afford a trip to the USA or the United Kingdom to find a convention.

I know there are a number of gamers in my country who are eager to form an official role-playing group, but the lack of organization is a problem. There are many small groups scattered throughout the cities, but there's nothing to bring them together.

You could be a considerable help, and I have put together a short list of requests and questions:

We need a list of Network members in Iceland.

We need information on how conventions are run and how we can raise our player and judge scores. (I know nothing about the tournament rules even after being a member for a year and a half.)

What is the cost of chartering an official club in Iceland? Is there any chance that a club located overseas can get playtesting materials?

Issue 52 had a short article about a new branch office for the Network in the U.K. It also mentioned a lower price for members in Europe. What is the new price?

Hannes Hogni Vilhjalmsson
Reykjavik, Iceland

A membership list and some other materials are on their way to you, they should answer most of your questions. However, some of your questions are of interest to the entire membership:

The only way to get started on your judge or player ranking is to have or attend sanctioned events. Such events always are organized locally. Once your group gets busy with its own tournaments your scores should improve nicely.

The Network does not recognize group memberships except for official clubs. A sanctioned club must include at least 10 Network members in good standing. Complete information about official clubs is available from HQ.

Network clubs outside the United States have the same chances for getting playtesting materials as any other Network club. However, playtest groups are expected to send the game manufacturer sponsoring the playtest frequent and timely reports on their progress, and sometimes clubs have to return manuscripts and other materials. This could make playtesting difficult and expensive for clubs located overseas.

Gamers in Europe, including Iceland, can join through our new United Kingdom branch for £13.95 a year. A two-year membership costs £24.95. Chartering a club through the U.K. office costs £21.95 for the first year and £15.95 to renew each year. Send payments and inquries to the RPGA Network, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, England. Payments must be made in U.K. Sterling.

Pardon Me, I Didn't Know This Was a Private Party

The members of NECCC (NorthEast Convention Coordinators' Committee) would like to express our dismay at the sanctioning of Network events at private parties. We believe that this is contrary to the spirit of the Network.

It has always been the goal of the Network to bring players together. This goes all the way back to the original membership list, a strong, early, selling point for membership. Further, to quote from the membership application, "The RPGA® Network is an international organization of gaming enthusiasts dedicated to excellence in role playing games. If you're looking for Gamers who share your interest in role-playing games . . . join the RPGA Network." From the page titled 'Welcome to the RPGA Network,' included in the mem-

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POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR Inc.'s ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published bi-monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all correspondence is: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Telephone: (414)248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ Network members. US membership rates are $15 per year (bulk mail delivery only); Canadian rates are $22; foreign rates are $25 per year (surface mail) or $45 per year (air mail). All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of membership materials must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork that are accompanied by our Standard Disclosure Form. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submission will be returned unless it is also accompanied by a self-adressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

Unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication, materials submitted to the publisher for publication in POLYHEDRON Newszine are accepted solely upon the condition that the materials may be edited and published in POLYHEDRON Newszine or used in RPGA™ Network sanctioned tournaments, conventions and events without cost to the publisher. TSR and the RPGA Network shall make no other use of the materials unless TSR and the author or artist enter into a written agreement regarding such use.

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Gaming With Computers

Software for Your Gaming Pleasure

by Michael Lach

The personal and micro computer market is one of the most dynamic in the world. What was once a small field, run by a handful of "hackers" from garages and basement shops, is now an enormous industry managed by many corporations and catering to most of the population. The role-playing game community has had similar growth; the three little DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game books written by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson fueled the role-playing game industry and garnered thousands of fans for the hobby.

It is fairly easy to make the computer serve the gamer. I use my computer to do many of my gaming tasks, and I feel that many other gamers could benefit from heavier game-related computer use. Even without specific game-aid software, there is a great deal that you, as a gamer with a minimum of computer know-how, can do to get more out of your machine.

Word Processors

Word processing is one of the most common uses of personal computers, and one that has obvious applications for gamers. A word processor makes the computer function as a sophisticated typewriter, giving the user the power to search, edit, and format a document before it is printed out on paper. A word processor is a great aid in designing dungeons, character personalities, and other writing jobs. It reduces mistakes and typographical errors, and it makes text easier to read. A word processor will make your writing easier and better; encounter stats do not have to be illegibly scrawled on musty paper anymore.

Spreadsheets

Most computer experts agree that it was a spreadsheet program called *VisiCalc* that made the Apple computer appeal to the public and started the first personal computer boom. *VisiCalc* is one of many spreadsheet programs currently available. A spreadsheet allows the user to perform calculations instantly, and quickly alter the values to see how other variables change. Mathematical formulas can be entered, and then recalculated instantaneously with different numerical variables.

It is an unfortunate fact that many games involve lots of mathematical computations. However, a spreadsheet program makes those horrendous computations easier, and shows the user how those computations change with different numbers. Remember the last time you designed a car for the *Car Wars* game? It was difficult to simultaneously keep track of the cargo spaces remaining in the car body, the weight of components and armor, and the cost, while still trying to be creative. With a spreadsheet, keeping track of all that information and performing the computations is much easier. A spreadsheet also helps you answer many "what if?" questions. I have such a Car Wars spreadsheet file with the car construction formulas on my computer. To see how much money and cargo space I'd save by reducing the amount of front armor by three points, all I do is type in a new number, and the results are on my screen instantly. The same can be said of other games in which the players design things that have many factors, such as spaceships in *Traveller* and *STAR FRONTIERS*® game or characters in *Champions*.

Other computations that need to be frequently performed and are somewhat difficult are much easier if a spreadsheet program is used. I use my computer to help find troop classifications for the War Machine system of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game (*Companion* set), to keep track of building and troop costs, and to calculate and store experience point awards. In general, a spreadsheet can help you perform many calculations quickly and get a better understanding of the calculations you are performing. Expressions and variables can be effortlessly changed to show how different aspects relate to one another.

Databases

Database software allows a computer to maintain, sort, and organize large quantities of data. Commonly used by businesses to store information about their clients (like name, address, and occupation, etc.) or inventory (size, weight, company to order from, etc.), a database program has a great many uses to the gamer.

On my database, I keep a list of characters on the computer. If I need an NPC fitting a certain description, I turn on the printer, hit a button, and the computer searches through my NPC files, finding the ones meeting the qualifications I specified. It then prints out a record sheet ready for play. For example, if I want a fighter with an Intelligence above 14 and three magic weapons, the computer will search and find all that fit the above criteria. I do the same with monsters. When I am designing an adventure, instead of paging through the rule book for an appropriate foe for the PCs, I tell the computer "find me a level VI monster with magic resistance above 10%" and it will do so. In the D&D® game *Masters* set there is a system to balance encounters based on party level and the desired challenge. With a database, all you have to do is tell the computer the party's level and the challenge desired, and the computer will calculate the hit dice and ability of the ideal opponent. While this example takes a solid knowledge of your database's features and considerable calculation on the part of the computer, it leaves you and your imagination free to decide other, more important matters.

A database also can be used to keep track of statistics for miniatures or boardgames. When my group plays *Tractics,* we put the data for each tank in the computer to reduce paperwork. I do the same when we are fighting in outer space; each of the spaceships has its own record in the computer that contains all the data about it.

Desktop Publishers

Desktop publishing is one of the newest applications for small computers, and one of the most powerful. The user is able to design pages of text and graphics and to create signs, newsletters, and text ready for printing. Most current desktop-publishing systems are quite expensive, especially when you consider the high quality printer that is necessary to achieve publishable results. Nevertheless, to those with access to the proper

equipment it is an opportunity to be taken advantage of. Desktop publishing can improve your gaming immensely.

A local hobby shop uses a desktop publishing system to produce a bi-monthly newsletter which is sent out to its customers, providing them with up-to-date product news, price lists, and general information about the shop and the local gaming community. Several game mail order catalogs have been using a small computer to produce high-quality catalogs, and some game publishers lay out products with a desktop publishing system.

But, can a non-business user benefit from the new desktop publishing technology? Certainly. Think of how nice it would be to produce a club newsletter with information on all current club happenings and events without having to worry about the expensive layout and typesetting costs. Convention brochures would be cheaper to make and would look much better. Even "fake" newsletters and newspaper clippings can be created, which add a great deal of spice to a gaming session. Give your players of TOP SECRET/S.I.® game or *Mercenaries, Spies, And Private Eyes* one page of the game world's newspaper which you made with a desktop publisher that has fictional information regarding the current adventure.

Graphics And Sound

The majority of the newer computers have sophisticated graphics and sound capabilities which easily can be taken advantage of by the gamer. Most computers have word processors or graphic easels that can use several type styles, thus making it simple to produce Old English, Elvish, or any other sorts of letters. This makes it easy to create high quality props for your gaming sessions. Many computer games (especially the adventure-type) have extravagant pictures which usually can be removed and used for other purposes, like describing a room. The sound effects in many adventure games can also add to the entertainment. I have used a voice synthesizer on my computer to play the part of The Computer in *Paranoia;* the players found it wonderfully entertaining.

With the advent of publication-quality laser printers, computers have stepped to the forefront of graphic design. Sophisticated graphics programs, such as *Adobe Illustrator 88* or *Aldus Freehand,* allow an inexperienced user to create publication quality art. With computer aided design software (CAD) maps can be easily produced that are publication quality. Most of the maps in POLYHEDRON® Newszine are generated on a computer and printed on a laser printer.

Programming Languages

Programming languages require a bit more know-how than the packaged software mentioned above, but they give the user more freedom in creating tasks for the computer. These tasks can be as simple as adding a few numbers together to simulate real-life situations. Simple interpretive programming languages, like BASIC and LOGO, allow the user to specialize his computer for his needs, and they offer infinite possibilities to the gamer. The *HyperCard* software for Apple Macintosh computers makes programming much more accessible to the everyday user.

A common computer program for gamers is the character generation program. Such a program can take on various levels of complexity, but essentially it rolls all the appropriate dice and looks up the appropriate tables to create a character. These programs are helpful for making large lists of NPCs, especially in the systems that require lots of calculation such as the TOP SECRET/S.I game. I am familiar with programs written by gamers to calculate star and planet motions for various science-fiction games, weather generation programs which randomly determine complete weather conditions for a week or month, calculate abilities for characters or devices, and simulate combat on several scales. There are many possibilities for small, easy-to-write programs that can aid your gaming; experiment and investigate to find what suits your needs best.

The small computer can be a great aid to any gamer. With minimal effort, many commercial programs can be made to work for you and your game, increasing your overall enjoyment. ❑

Bookwyrms

The New Worlds of TSR™ Books

by Jim Lowder

Books provide a wealth of gaming ideas. In the past few years fiction and RPGs have been wed in a number of successful ways, such as the DRAGONLANCE, and FORGOTTEN REALMS® book and game lines. Other games, such as FASA's recent hit, *Shadowrun*, and book series including the popular *Wild Cards* anthologies, also have crossed from games to novels or from novels to game systems. Then there's the Tolkien market, Chaosium's Cthulhu games (spawned from the writings of HP Lovecraft), West End's new game and book line, and so on.

As creative gamers, however, you don't have to wait for good books to be adapted into one of the various established game systems before you mine them for good ideas. Not that you should rush out and try to publish modules based on every book you read; there are copyright laws to prevent such things. However, using a good plot or a set of interesting characters from a favorite book as a springboard for your next RPG campaign is always a good idea.

For those of you looking for a book line to jumpstart your imagination, and maybe help put some life into your next AD&D® game, we have just the thing for you: the TSR Books line.

In 1988, Dan Parkinson's critically acclaimed science-fantasy novel, *Starsong*, kicked off the line. In that same year, books as diverse as the horror tale, *Vampire in Moscow*, and *Red Sands*, an Arabian fantasy adventure by Paul Thompson and Tonya Carter, helped to fill out the line. Thompson and Carter will be familiar to you DRAGONLANCE® saga fans as the authors of *Darkness and Light* and *Riverwind, the Plainsman*. Dan Parkinson recently joined the proud group of authors writing about Krynn, too; his new epic, *The Gates of Thorbardin* will hit the shelves in September.

Through the three-year history of the TSR Books line, we've presented exciting novels, some by fantasy authors familiar to TSR audiences, such as Nancy Varian Berberick and Rose Estes. We've also provided fledgling fantasy writers, such as Mary Herbert, the opportunity to present their original worlds to you. Her novel, *Dark Horse*, spins a compelling tale set against a vivid backdrop. The well-developed lands and peoples of the horse tribes are themselves great examples of the kinds of inspiration you can expect from TSR Books.

1990 will also see two other fantasy novels published under the TSR banner. The first — a June release — is *Night Watch*, by veteran fantasy author, Robin Wayne Bailey. A nefarious plot begins with the murder of all the fabled seers of Greyhawk. It's up to Garett Starlen, commander of the sprawling city's night watch, to solve the crimes and prevent the destruction of Oerth's most magnificent city.

Robin Bailey, who is also a contributor to the popular *Thieves' World* series and author of five other novels, depicts an exciting, lively fantasy world in *Night Watch*. Game Masters are sure to find lots of ideas for populating their fantasy campaign worlds and fleshing out their cities in this version of the city of Greyhawk.

The October release in this year's TSR Books line is another fantasy story: *The Road West*, by Gary Wright. In this tale, Keven of Kingsend sets out to build a new life for himself as an apprentice in the Kings Arms Academy. He excels in the martial arts, and when he travels on the road to the west, he discovers adventure — and himself — in the brooding mountains above beleaguered Midvale.

You're sure to find Keven, the hero of *The Road West*, a well-developed model for your RPG characters, and his adventures both in and out of the Kings Arms Academy should provide plots enough for hours of good gaming.

But fantasy isn't the only thing we publish in the TSR Books line. As mentioned earlier, horror has a place on the shelves. So does mystery. In fact, the now-classic *Bimbos of the Death Sun* by Sharyn McCrumb was our first foray into mystery publishing. The book is a whodunnit centering on the murder of a famous SF author at a convention. The crime is solved with a clever use of role-playing games, and the book was considered so successful that it won the 1988 Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Original Paperback Mystery.

Science fiction has a comfortable home with TSR Books. In the past, we've published such noteworthy SF books as *Monkey Station* by Ardath Mayhar and Ron Fortier, in which a plague wipes out much of civilization, and a group of evolving macaques in South America find themselves quickly becoming the dominant species on the planet.

Sound like a good plot for a science-fiction RPG? You should take a look at Susan Torian Olan's book, *The Earth Remembers*. In this post-apocalyptic, futuristic western, Cimarron Langtry returns to the land of his youth. There, he rekindles the people's uprising against the occupation regime that has the area crushed beneath its iron heel. His life is worth nothing — until he joins forces with a ruthless mercenary, a mystic giant, and a beautiful, mysterious healer. They in turn forge an alliance with a race of subterranean mutants evolved from the dinosaurs and a proud and fierce group of new Comanches.

In 1990, we've added three new science-fiction novels to the TSR Books roster. The first, which hit the bookstores in April, was *Warsprite*. Jefferson Swycaffer tells the tale of two robots who crash to Earth on a quiet night in the desolate hills of Wyoming. One robot is a vicious killer, while the other is unarmed, though she possesses an ability her warrior brother does not have: She can think.

The thinking robot, Della, finds both allies and enemies in her new world. But she can never forget her primary mission. She is programmed to face her murderous brother robot in a final confrontation in a radioactive chamber far beneath the Nevada desert.

In August, Timothy Madden's *Outbanker* is scheduled for release. In this novel, a new kind of hero premieres; first there was the knight, then the samurai, then the American cowboy. In the future, the mythic heroes are outbankers, men and women who patrol the far perimeters of their star system's gravity corpuscle for years at a time. They maintain their lonely vigils with only their command control computers for company, as they protect their home colonies from the powerful dreadnaughts of the covetous Corporate Hegemony.

Continued on page 31

Easy Money

An AD&D® game adventure for characters of 4th through 6th levels

by Jay Tummelson and Lew Wright

Dungeon Master's Background

This adventure springs from the Jack Mooney & Sons Circus, which is detailed in *Inside Ravens Bluff,* a FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign accessory. Like the Living City, the circus continues to be developed and expanded by members of the RPGA™ Network.

At the time of this scenario, the circus is planning its route through the Realms. It will be in Ravens Bluff, its winter headquarters, for only a few more weeks. Jack Mooney, the circus owner and ringmaster, wants to hire the player characters to capture a great cave bear with a brilliant golden coat. The bear is rumored to be living in the hills near Ravens Bluff, and he wants the bear as a featured attraction under the Big Top where it will increase business. His motivations go beyond monetary concerns, however, as he knows that hunters are after the bear for its fur. Mooney, a ranger, would rather see the fine animal under his protection.

In addition, because Mooney fears the hunters will carelessly kill any bears in the area, he wants the PCs to capture as many adult bears as they find. Mooney will take the most trainable of these bears and include them in an animal act. The others he will release in the wilderness along the circus' route.

The golden cave bear is more than it seems — it is a werebear named Zarin Marblehead who would like very much to be a part of Mooney's circus. However, the PCs will not realize the bear's true nature until near the end of the adventure.

Statistics for the werebear and Jack Mooney appear at the end of the scenario.

Players' Introduction

Jack Mooney, owner and ringmaster of the Jack Mooney & Sons Circus, the greatest show in the Realms, wants to hire you.

"In the mountains near Ravens Bluff, there is rumored to live a great cave bear with fur that shines in the sunlight like burnished gold. Few claim to have seen the animal. And those few say they caught just a glimpse before the bear vanished in the woods. I want to add that bear to my Big Top attractions. If you can capture this animal unharmed, I will pay you 5,000 gold pieces. Further, because I want to increase the number of circus bears, I will pay you 800 gold pieces for each additional one you capture — uninjured. I will provide three large circus wagons which you can use to transport the bears."

The ringmaster's eyes sparkle. "Yes, what an act those bears will make. Children of all ages will watch in wonder as the bears perform in the center ring.

"My sources tell me that the great golden bear is likely in the foothills of those mountains. You had best get started now. The Jack Mooney & Sons Circus is slated to begin its new tour of Faerun in a few weeks. May Chauntea watch over you."

The circus wagons are each drawn by two oxen in yoke. A character with the animal handling proficiency should have no problem with the beasts. Anyone else will find that the oxen would rather graze, and are somewhat irritated that the yokes won't let them. Each wagon is a large hardwood box reinforced with iron. There is a single door at the rear of the wagon, locked with an iron hasp with a spike stuck into it to keep it closed. There is a small (1′ by 2′) barred window six feet off the ground on either side, and a third one in the rear door. A couple of bales of fresh straw have been broken over the floor inside.

Have the players determine which characters are driving the wagons and set up a marching order. Fill in a little time with minor problems of cross-country travel. The trip will take a litte more than two days to the foothills, and the same amount of time back. The first day on the road will be uneventful.

Encounter One — Orcs In The Trees

Trees dot the landscape, giving way to denser stands of woods where in the far, far distance a series of low foothills begin. A large, old forest borders the area, and you can tell that it is probably more than another day's travel to the hills.

The player characters will have to camp for the night, as they will be exhausted if they press on.

Have them detail how they set up camp; watches, if any; what they are doing about food (hot or cold camp, rations or foraging, etc.); and generally let them settle in.

The characters are being watched by a dozen orcs, who are using the trees and bushes for cover. They use worgs for mounts. The characters will not discover the orcs unless they wander within 50′ of a dense briar patch. Three orcs are in the briar patch, the rest are further away. If the orcs are discovered, they immediately attack. If the PCs discovering the orcs sound a warning, the rest of the orcs and worgs attack.

If the orcs are not discovered, they wait until the player characters — or at least most of them — have turned in for the evening. The orcs and worgs will attack separately. The worgs use their normal bite attack, while the orcs, who are specially trained to fight with both hands, wield scimitars and horsemen's flails. The orcs and worgs attempt to charge through camp hitting anyone they can.

When a dozen of the attackers have been killed, the remaining orcs and worgs attempt to flee. The party can pursue them or let them go. The fleeing orcs will mount any available worgs to help make good their escape. If the PCs capture and question an orc, he tells them the raiding party likes to go after small groups of people so they can take their money and weapons. The orcs know about the big gold colored bear. As a matter of fact, the orcs saw it just west of here three days ago, but they left it alone. The bear had big claws and wasn't carrying money pouches. The orcs think its lair is somewhere up in the hills.

Orcs (12): AC 6; HD 1; hp 6 each; MV 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/2-5; THAC0 19; Int Average (8-9); SZ M; AL LE; XP 15 each

Worgs (12): AC 6; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; MV 18 (12 when carrying orcs); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; THAC0 15; Int Low (5-7); SZ L; AL N (evil); XP 175 each

Allow the rest of the night to pass uneventfully. The next morning the party should break camp, do any healing required, saddle up, and move out. Play the second day's journey much like the first by noting marching order, food, water, etc. The PCs arrive at a low rise of foothills about dusk. If any of the player characters have a tracking proficiency, they notice bear tracks throughout this area. The tracks lead to an "S" shaped gorge.

If the party insists on exploring the hills that night, let them. Make adjustments for the light. There is a three-quarter moon, and there are night-hunting predators about. The PCs can search as much as they like, but they will find nothing because of the darkness. However, they will hear the sounds of the unseen predators all around them. Eventually, they should conclude that they must wait for daylight to continue their search.

At midnight, they will have another incident. If there is a watch posted, tell those characters:

It is the middle of the night, and although the sky is dotted with clouds, you easily can see your campsite in the light of the moon. An eerie chill begins at the base of your spine and rises till the hairs on the back of your neck are standing on end.

Pause for PC actions, then continue with the following.

You hear the sound of leaves crunching underfoot, and the sharp snap of a twig breaking. Something is out there.

If the PCs investigate, they find nothing. Later, from a different direction, they hear a snuffling sound. Then still later, a low growl reverberates. If PCs with tracking proficiency search, they note deer tracks and wolf tracks, both about a day old. Those who continue to search find a natural salt lick and a large variety of tracks, but nothing recent.

About two hours before morning, someone will hear an animal climbing a tree 20 to 30 yards away from camp. Those who investigate find a raccoon.

Just before dawn a ground mist rises, coating the area with a three-foot-high soft fog. With it comes a momentary, but unearthly chill, which cuts through clothing as if there weren't any. A little

later, dawn will come, and the mist will burn off, leaving a normal looking campsite and the adventure ahead. (The events of the night were harmless natural occurrences.)

Encounter Two — Going On A Bear Hunt

The following encounters occur as the player characters try to find the golden cave bear's lair. The bear's trail leads into and throughout the "S" shaped gorge. The gorge is littered with caves. Consult your map and ask the player characters where they are going. The caves marked on your map with a number involve an encounter. All other caves are empty. The bear is a curious sort, and his tracks lead to each cave.

1. Giant Scorpion Nest

This moderately large cave entrance is fronted by an apron of rock. The bear tracks lead up onto the apron. If the PCs check, they notice the tracks go up onto the rock from both sides, coming and going, but there are no tracks on the apron itself.

This cave serves as the nest for five giant scorpions. If the PCs enter the cave, the scorpions run forward and go into a defensive posture for two rounds. This will give the PCs time to leave without a fight. If the PCs do not leave, or if they attack the scorpions, the scorpions retaliate.

Giant Scorpions (5): AC 3; HD 5+5; MV 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4; SA Poison sting (Type F); THAC0 15; Int Nil- (0); SZ M; AL Nil; XP 650 each

2. Bear Trap

A pit trap lined at the bottom with sharpened stakes has been cleverly concealed along the path. Characters with tracking proficiency easily can spot it if they are looking for tracks. A clerical *find traps* also will reveal it.

Characters who fall in the pit suffer 3d6 damage. The pit is 15' deep, and the spikes are numerous and made out of wood.

3. Bandits' Treasure Cave

This branching cave once served as a hideout for a group of greedy bandits. It was abandoned after a quarrel among their members ended in two deaths. The two corpses — and three treasure chests that were too large to be carried easily —remain behind. The chests, which are visible from the cave entrance, are closed and locked. Inside are 3,000 copper pieces and 2,500 silver pieces. The ghosts of the two bandits also reside here, carrying on their bickering through all eternity. They will put aside their fight long enough to try to scare off the intruders. If the PCs stop outside the cave entrance, they hear an eerie moaning which sounds like a far-off battle. The ghosts are between the PCs and the chests.

The ghosts will not immediately attack, as they are busy arguing. PCs entering the caves hear the following exchange:

> " . . . and I tells ya, it weren't my fault! I didn't know Bork was gonna slip a dirk inta ya over a puny ring."
>
> "Aw stuff it! I've heard ya say that for 10 years now. Yer full of it! You put 'im up to it, fer sure. Why else woulda ya been sneakin' up on me like that? You wanted it for yerself, and you know it!"
>
> "I wuz jus' tryin' ta get a better look at it, that's all! If you wasn't so danged quick with yer sword, I'd still be trampin' around alive, maybe holed up wit' the rest of 'em, suckin' up to a cool pint. And now look what we got! Chests of treasure an' no way to get at it . . . Hey, we got company!"

If the PCs continue on into the cave, the ghosts moan and cry, saying, "Gooo Awaaaayyyy . . . . The Curse of Bork the Unfaithful is upon you . . . . Leave this accursed cave while you still can . . . ." If the PCs are slow to respond, the ghosts begin to argue about the toughness of the intruders. The ghosts enjoy arguing, and it should provoke the PCs into some action. If the PCs try to talk to the ghosts, the ghosts will invent all kinds of reasons why the PCs should leave and not touch the chests. If the PCs keep coming, the ghosts attack.

Ghosts (2): AC 0 or 8; HD 10; hp 50, 47; MV 9; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 years; SA Magic jar; THAC0 11; Int Highly (13-14); SZ M; AL LE; XP 7,000 each

4. More Traps

This "U" shaped trap has been placed around the entrance of a cave by hunters after the golden bear. The solid ground of the "U" has been roughed up to make it look like a lightly covered pit trap. The bear, in avoiding the obvious trap, should have fallen in the real trap while going around. However, the bear was too smart and avoided the thing altogether. If the PCs do not check the area closely, they are likely to fall in this devious pit. The pit is 15' deep and has spikes at the bottom. Characters falling in suffer 3d6 damage. The cave beyond the trap is empty.

5. The Old Hermit

This cave is home to an old hermit from Kara-Tur. The entrance is decorated with carved, wooden totems, one on each side. The carvings depict oriental dragons. The entrance is partially blocked by a bright red wooden portcullis. If the PCs attempt to open the portcullis, the hermit comes to meet them. He acts detached and aloof toward the PCs, possessing little social skills. If they question him, he monotonously answers that, "The path to Truth takes different bends for different men." Other favorite sayings of his include: "Attention to one's task at hand is more enlightening than the dreams of the Emperor," "Never try to teach a pig to sing: it is a waste of time and annoys the pig," "A sentient being seeks not to create an entirely new path nor follow another's, but rather selects excerpts from many paths while watching for the untrod way which begets new knowledge." Make up additional words of wisdom if the PCs continue to talk to him.

Some possibilities include: "The sparrow flies not with the hawk," "There can be teaching without words," "There can be value in action which is actionless," "Hatred does not cease by hatred," "The yielding conquers the resistant, and the soft conquers the hard," "All men know the advantage of being useful, but no one knows the advantage of being useless," "A sound man is good at salvage; at seeing nothing is lost," "The only constant is change," "The future is not given to us; the past we cannot relive," and "In Now is our life and in Here is our world."

If the PCs ask the hermit about the bear, he tells them, "I will impart my words of wisdom in exchange for food." When the PCs give him food, he directs them to the bear cave.

If the PCs attack him, he uses his skills to defend himself, but he tries to run away before fighting.

Characters searching the cave after the hermit is gone find a small candle-lit shrine, bag of food, and a straw sleeping mat.

Hermit: AC -2; HD 17 (M 16); hp 48; MV 30; #AT 3; Dmg 3d6+3 (X3); THAC0 10; Int Highly (13-14); HD 10; #At 3; SZ M; AL NG; XP None

Monk Abilities

OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW
97	95	99	99	50	99

In addition, the hermit sufers only half damage from magical attacks that cause injury, is immune to all poisons, and there is an 85 percent chance that *charm, hypnosis,* and *suggestion* spells will not work on him.

6. The Werebear Cave

The lair of Zarin, the golden cave bear consists of a "Y" shaped passage with a second "Y" shaped passage branching off the left fork. Zarin is asleep. His position is marked on the map. If the PCs are quiet, they will not wake the bear until they are within 10' of him. Otherwise, he will wake and lumber out to investigate what is making noise in his cave.

As long as the PCs can maintain quiet, they can wander around the cave at will.

At the fork of the left-hand passage is a pile of old equipment from previous adventurers: leather and chain armor, short swords, long swords, maces, quarter-staves, trampled bows and arrows, shredded canvas backpacks, and two intact leather sacks. One sack is a *bag of holding,* 1,000-pound capacity.

The magic bag, which belongs to Zarin, holds a beautifully carved ironwood quarterstaff*; a new, empty spell book; a full spell book (see Zarin's spell book); a pair of jewelled throwing daggers; an oilskin poncho; a small bag of exotic herbs and spices; 50' of fine elven rope; a bullseye lantern; 3 flasks of oil; a leather pouch with thieves' tools in it; a fine silver tinder box; a gold necklace with an ivory horse; a bone map case; studded gauntlets*; a pair of high soft boots*; a short sword* and scabbard; a small pouch filled with a dozen gems (total value, 12,000 gold), and a fine silver brooch.

* These are magic items detailed with Zarin's character statistics.

Down the left-hand side of the left passage is a small room with a pool of water in the center, fed by a rivulet which runs down one wall. There are claw marks on the walls, and tufts of golden fur cling to outcroppings of rock.

The werebear has been watching the PCs, and because of the circus wagons has realized what they are up to. He thinks it might be fun to be with a circus for a change of scenery, and therefore he will allow the PCs to capture him.

However, the werebear doesn't want to make his capture appear too easy, so he fights them a little, missing PCs just barely with his claws. He pretends to be quickly subdued.

The items in the *bag of holding* are his. If the PCs do not take the bag, he will snag it with his claws as they drag him by the area.

Encounter Four — Bringing Back The Bear

When the characters start their trip back to Ravens Bluff, and are settling in for another evening in the wilderness, have them describe the layout of the camp, such as where is the fire, if any, where are the horses and the wagon, etc.

If the PCs recovered the werebear's *bag of holding,* he will use his spells, such as *unseen servant,* and other abilities to get out of the wagon and retrieve his items.

If necessary, he uses some of spells, such as *audible glamer, phantasmal force,* and *ventriloquism* to rattle bushes and make animal noises to create a distraction. When he has his items, he returns to the wagon.

Encounter Five — Bear Tricks

The PCs should be continuing their trek back to the Jack Mooney & Sons circus.

As they prepare to make camp the next evening, the werebear decides to have a little fun. He will switch around some of the player character's equipment, using the aid of his spells, if needed.

The only way the bear can be caught is if a player tells the DM his character is watching the wagon and the bear. Further, if the character is being obvious about watching the wagon, the bear will catch on and remain inactive. A PC who catches the bear in the act, will see the golden bear transform into a handsome, young half-elf.

Caught In Bear's Clothing

If the bear is caught, he will own up to his true nature.

> "Hey, what's the matter? You guys can't take a joke? I'm not trying to hurt you! Take it easy!"

If the PCs are willing to listen, he explains that his name is Zarin Marblehead and that he has been up in the hills enjoying nature, doing magical research, and getting in tune with the wildlife. Now, however, he is tired of the solitary life and wants to head back to Ravens Bluff. When he spotted the PCs and overheard them talking about catching the golden bear for the Jack Mooney Circus, he decided to play along and allow himself to be caught. He says after the PCs take him to Jack, he will cut a deal with the ringmaster and make some money in the circus business.

Encounter Six — Web Of Pilgrims

The next day is mostly uneventful. By now the bear's true identity likely has been discovered. If this is the case, the bear points out that he would prefer to ride on the wagon, rather than in it.

In the early afternoon, when the PCs are not too far out of Ravens Bluff, run the following encounter.

The party is just starting up a low rise when they hear excited shouting from the other side of the hill and off to the left. Investigation reveals several things:

*A party of pilgrims is clustered around a point along a line of trees. They are throwing things at the trees.

* The pilgrims are dressed in the colors and symbols of Torm.

* Closer inspection shows that an elder pilgrim is trapped in the web of a group of giant spiders. The spiders, which already have paralyzed the pilgrim with their poison, are busily wrapping up the man.

* The pilgrims' attempts to throw rocks at the spiders to drive them off are futile.

* Every time a pilgrim rushes forward to try and drag the victim out of the web, a spider charges down, attacking the would-be rescuer.

Giant Spiders (6): AC 4; HD 4+4; hp 26 each; MV 3, Wb 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Poison (Type O); THAC0 17; Int Low (5-7); SZ L; AL CE; XP 650

If the PCs kill the spiders, the pilgrims will rejoice and present the heroes with four pounds of dried apples. If the PCs are able to save the elder pilgrim with a *neutralize poison*, they will be very happy and add in four pounds of dried peaches.

Zarin Marblehead

Male Half Elf Werebear 7th/7th Wizard/Thief

STR: 15
INT: 18
WIS: 12
DEX: 18
CON: 15
CHR: 13
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 30
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 160 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Golden Brown/Brown
Age: 40

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, dagger, short sword, long bow, lasso
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Juggling (17), tightrope walking (18), tumbling (19), gem cutting (16), herbalism (16), reading/writing (19), spellcraft (16)
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Halfling, Gnomish, Centaur, Brownie

Magic Items: *Gauntlets of swimming and climbing, boots of elvenkind, short sword +1, bag of holding*
Spells/Day: 4 3 2 1

Thief Skills:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
65	85	30	80	65	45	70	15

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Audible Glamer
Cantrip
Detect Magic
Feather Fall
Jump
Phantasmal Force
Unseen Servant
Ventriloquism

Level Two Spells

ESP
Improved Phantasmal Force
Invisibility
Web

Level Three Spells

Hold Person
Lightning Bolt
Spectral Force
Suggestion

Level Four Spells

Fumble
Solid Fog

Werebear form: AC 2; HD 7+3; hp 45; MV 9; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8; SA Hug for 2-16; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magic weapons; THAC0 13; Int Genius (18); SZ L; AL CG

Zarin is very intelligent and protective of his true identity, not readily showing others he is a werebear.

If, during the course of the adventure, the PCs make him too uncomfortable or jeopardize his life, he will escape — end of the scenario. He actually wants to join the circus; he sees it as a tremendous opportunity for someone of his abilities. He has heard of the legendary Jack Mooney, and wants to meet him and work with him.

Zarin is friendly and fun-loving. He enjoys practical jokes and poking fun (in a friendly way) at serious people.

Jack Mooney

12th Level Male Human Ranger

STR: 17
INT: 17
WIS: 15
DEX: 12
CON: 16
CHR: 17
AC Normal: -2
AC Rear: -2
Hit Points: 91
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Halfling, Dwarvish, Brownie, Centaur, Circus Jargon

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, lasso, dagger, long bow, spear, javelin
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Animal lore (17), animal handling (14), animal training, horses (15), animal training, great cats (15), animal training, elephants (15), riding, land-based (18), gaming (17), tracking (19)
Ranger Abilities: Hide in shadows, 77%; Move silently, 94%
Spells Memorized: Jack carries the following spells daily: *Animal friendship, locate animals or plants, charm person or mammal, speak with animals,* and *hold animal*
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0, cloak of protection +2, dagger +3, dagger +1, long sword of dancing, boots of elvenkind, ring of sustenance, ring of warmth, pouch of accessibility, stone of good luck*
Followers: Raynock, a tiger: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 3; D 2-5/2-5/1-10; SA Rear claws for 2d4 each; SD Surprised only on a 1; S L (7' long). Stray, a leopard: AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 3; D 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Rear claws for 4 each; SD Surprised only on a 1; S M (4' long). Calliope, a cheetah: AL N; AC 5; MV 15, sprint 45; HD 3; hps 20; #AT 3; 1-2/1-2/1-8; SA Rear claws 1-2 each; SD Surprised only on a 1; S M (4' long)

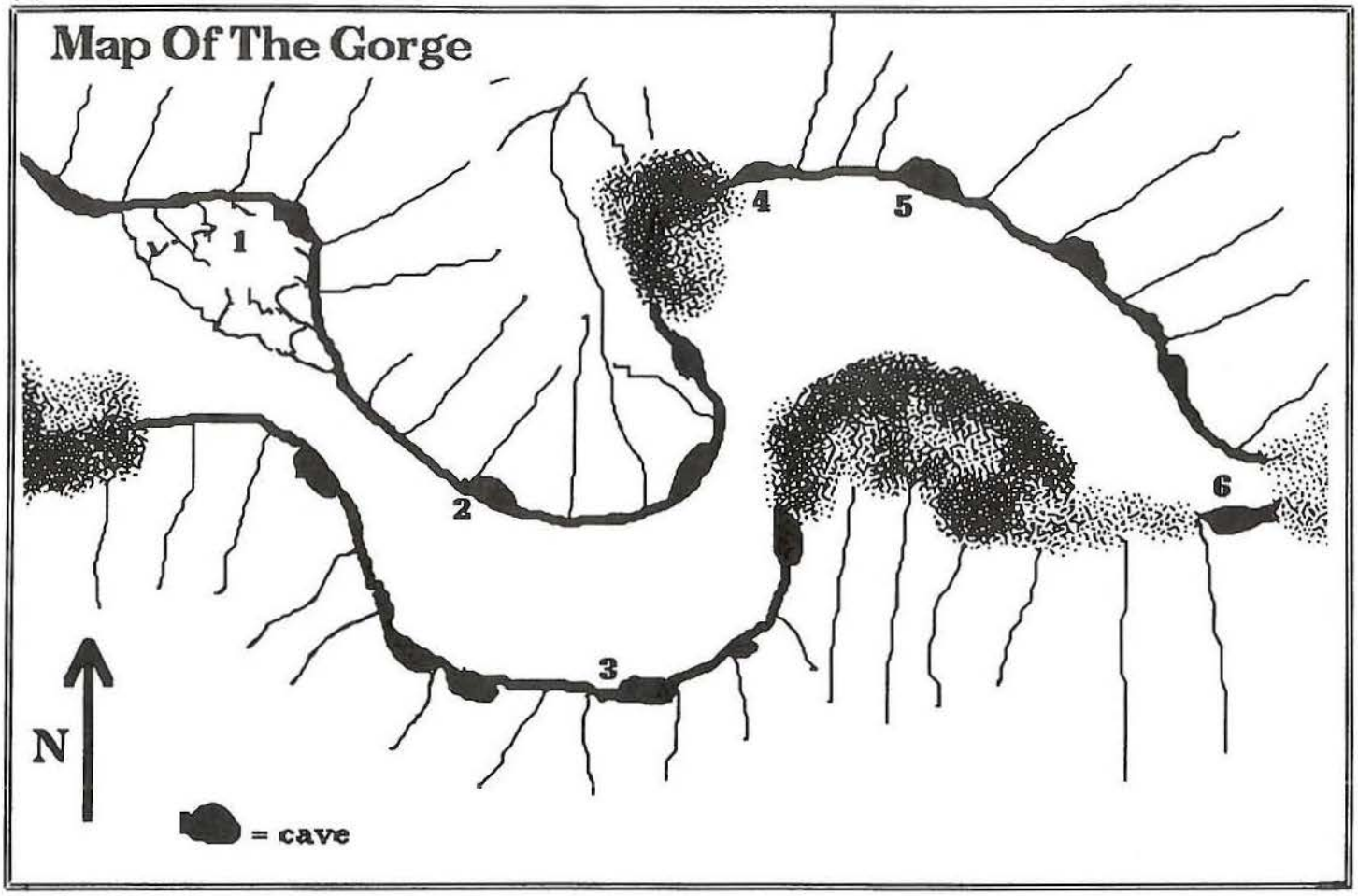
The renowned circus owner is 6' tall, has a well-muscled frame, and keeps his dark brown hair, which is graying at the temples, short and always styled. Jack is physically 45 years old, although he actually has lived 60 years. *Potions of longevity* he drank more than a decade ago renewed his body and increased his vitality.

Jack's skin is tanned and weathered because of the decades he spent outdoors as a ranger and later as a circus owner. The sun has added to the numerous deep wrinkles around his blue-flecked black eyes. The hard circus life has kept Jack in excellent physical shape, and his appearance, coupled with his overall rugged good looks, draws the admiration of human and demi-human women in every town the circus plays in. When traveling or when wintering in Ravens Bluff, he is often seen in the company of one or more of his great cat followers which he acquired during an adventure in the jungle.

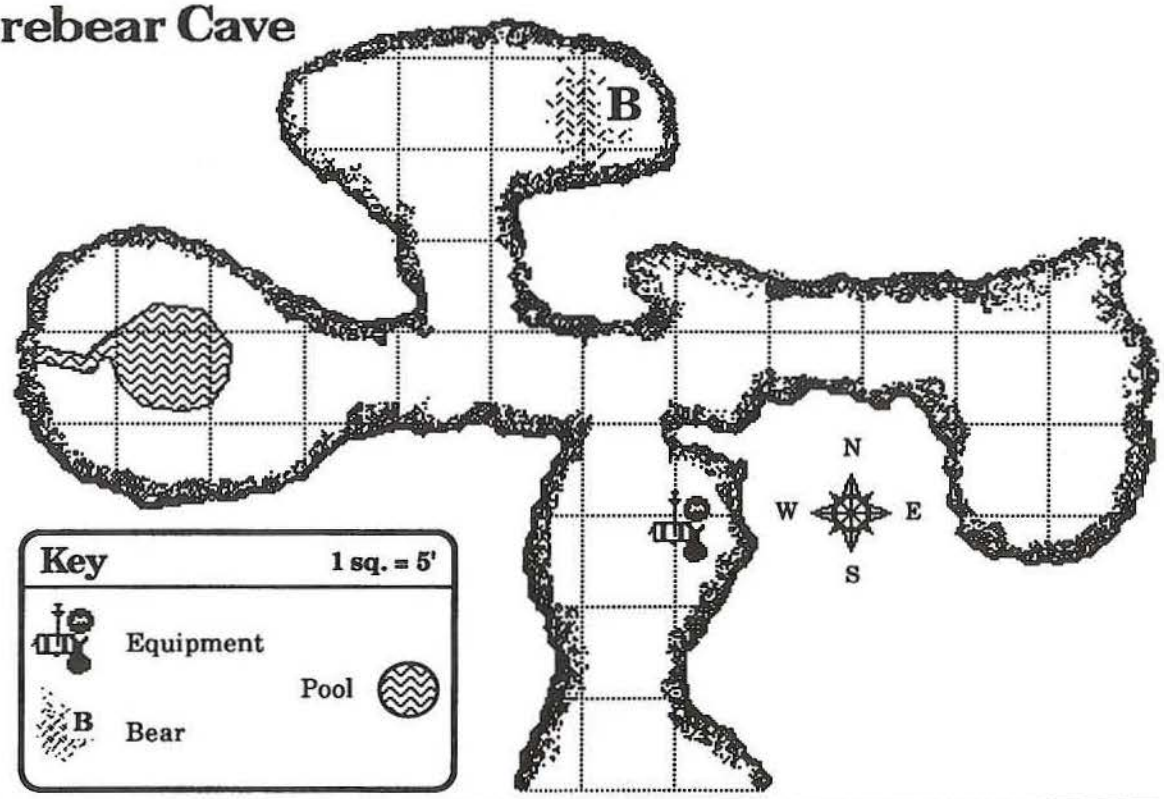
Jack is usually a happy-go-lucky man and is cheerful to his employees, who he considers part of his family. He always has a kind word to say to all of the workers, and he is careful to see that the circus operation remains safe so no harm will befall them. His pleasant nature is because of his work — being able to own a respectable business and at the same time travel wherever he pleases. His business is also responsible for his touch of immaturity, and he continues to hold his circus in a childlike wonder.

❑

Map Of The Gorge



Werebear Cave



Chakchak

by Roger E. Moore

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any non-arctic
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Military unit
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	5-20
ARMOR CLASS:	4 (10)
MOVEMENT:	9 (18 if *hasted)*
HIT DICE:	3+3
THAC0:	16 (with +1 strength bonus)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 (4 if *hasted)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-10/3-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	*Hasted* attacks
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (7′ tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	420

The chakchak is a nearly extinct form of hobgoblin, a remnant of the Unhuman Wars, that is taller and more muscular than the common variety. The chakchak is the product of a magical ritual that has converted it into a powerful "hack-and-slash" combatant: Both of the chakchak's forearms have been magically strengthened and end in bony axeheads that are parts of the creature's own skeleton. Chakchaks have ash gray skin, with dull black freckles covering their backs and faces. When met, these humanoids are nearly always wearing armor. Chakchaks speak only the hobgoblin tongue.

Combat: A chakchak's axe-arms are the equivalent of battle axes, each with a reach of about four feet. The bones of its arms and the bone axeheads themselves have been rendered as strong as steel, though they are not truly made of metal.

The chakchak can strike twice per round, once with each arm-axe, in normal combat. As a result of its training, it can *haste* itself for the first 3-12 rounds of combat if allowed to work itself into a berserk fury for one round beforehand, during which time it cannot perform any other action. When *hasted,* the chakchak can strike four times per round and move at double-normal speed (18). Once this *hasted* movement ceases, the chakchak fights normally thereafter. A chakchak can *haste* itself up to three times per day, but requires an hour's rest at some point between each use of its berserking talent.

Additionally, chakchaks are quite strong, each having a strength equal to 18 (nonpercentile), granting them +1 on attack rolls and +2 on damage. Nearly all chakchaks wear the same sort of armor, a form of banded mail, as per religious law; their strength allows them to move swiftly and with ease despite the burden, as if they wore no armor at all.

Habitat/Society: Fragments of humanoid lore and legend have been assembled by elven sages to give a picture of the chakchaks' origins. Pregnant hobgoblin females were selected by local shamans and witch doctors to have their unborn changed into chakchaks in a ceremony that invoked the names of humanoid gods now unknown. Following the ceremony, the females were separated from normal society until their children were born, after which the females were slain (apparently with their approval, if the legends are to be believed). The young chakchaks were raised by soldiers who gave them intense combat training, food, shelter, armor, and little else. As a result, the chakchaks usually matured into individuals with no emotional feelings except a too-easily triggered rage, as likely to erupt at hobgoblins and other chakchaks as at any enemy. Chakchaks were often controlled by witch doctors using the spell *charm person* on a daily basis. Having no hands, a chakchak was totally dependent upon other hobgoblin soldiers to be fed, dressed, and otherwise cared for; many were kept in prisonlike barracks to separate them from the public. Though feared for their fighting prowess, chakchaks appear to have been given the worst of treatment —worse, said one sage, than even the hobgoblins' prisoners.

The few individuals now found survived the Unhuman War only by being trapped by certain magical spells (e.g., *imprisonment, temporal stasis, trap the soul, wish*). These creatures are sometimes found within ancient dwarven citadels, where they were enspelled during raids, or in similar subterranean or deep-space locations. Some appear to have been hidden underground on certain worlds near the end of the Unhuman War; these "Doomsday warriors" (as one elven admiral christened them) were to be released by later generations of humanoids and used against their foes, but they were instead forgotten. Now they are merely hazards to those who explore ancient dungeons. Even if victorious in the short run, chakchaks invariably starve to death soon after they are set free upon the world again.

A chakchak is sexless (though masculine in general appearance) and is universally referred to as "it"; the creature's brutality and lack of finer feeling, marked even for a humanoid, encourage other races to treat it as genderless in conversation.

Ecology: Chakchaks never existed in great numbers, and they were created only for purposes of close combat. They held a very limited niche in their armies as assault troops and bodyguards; they were unable to utilize any long-range weaponry or magic, and their combat training was not flexible. Chakchaks were often slaughtered en masse by area-effect spells, pit and fire traps, and common archers. They also became the targets of adventurers who sought pride in defeating the best that the humanoid nations could offer. No known communities of hobgoblins have chakchaks among them. Only old elves and a few adventurers have any real knowledge of them now.

In their prime, chakchaks were greatly feared for their unusual ferocity. But as an experiment in developing an ultimate humanoid warrior, they must be counted as failures, as they could never live on their own without the extensive help of a larger social system. Created to destroy, their very limitations finally destroyed them as a race.

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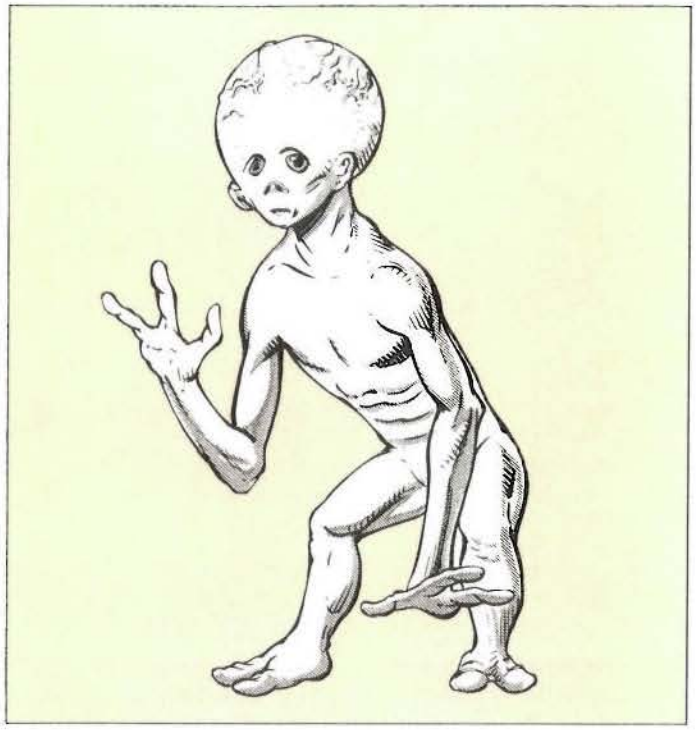
Oortling

by William W. Connors

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Comets
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-20
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1 – 1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2 (1d2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (3′ tall)
MORALE:	Unreliable (2-4)
XP VALUE:	15



Oortlings are a pathetic race who dwell on the natural comets that exist within the *crystal spheres*. While the oortlings once had a fairly sophisticated culture, they were dominated by the mind flayers early on in their evolution. Since that time, they have been manipulated and controlled by the space faring illithids and kept as cattle.

The typical oortling looks much like a dwarf. They are short, stocky, and noted for their pallor and bloated skulls. Within these skulls are the over-developed brains of the oortlings. Although they are kept from acquiring education or knowledge by their overlords, the oortlings have the potential for great intelligence. As a rule, however, the best any oortling's brain can hope for is to be the main course at a mind flayer feast.

Combat: The oortlings have had all knowledge of combat bred out of them by the mind flayers. They will cringe in fear from even the slightest possibility of violence. In cases where oortlings are in extreme pain or have lost their senses, they have been known to bite and scratch their opponents. While this attack is fairly feeble, it can inflict some minor damage (1d2 points).

Habitat/Society: Oortlings live on the flying mountains of ice and iron that men call comets. They make their homes by tunneling into the frozen surface, eventually into the iron or stone nucleus of the comet. Their communities are usually fairly small by human standards, with only 40-240 (4d6x10) oortlings living on any given comet. Of this number, half will be females and young.

While the oortling culture was once advanced enough to construct great palaces from the ice of their cometary homes, it has degenerated to a state of primitive tribalism. The main reason for this is the domination and domestication of the oortling people by the mind flayers. Even at the height of their culture, the oortlings had no chance of breaking free from the mental and physical bondage into which they were thrust by the illithids.

Currently, the oortlings are a broken people. All creativity or curiosity has been crushed from their spirits, leaving them a ghastly race of cattle. They are tended and guarded by a group of mind flayer "farmers" and then hauled away to sate the hunger of the illithids.

Ecology: Oortlings feed on the ice that makes up the comets on which they live. Their systems are able to break down the ice, extracting vital nutrients from it and filtering out toxins that would kill other humanoids. Only cometary ice contains the chemicals they need to sustain themselves, however, and a diet of normal water/ice will do nothing to nourish them.

Oortlings produce few useful byproducts or trade goods which other races might be interested in. The sole exception to this, of course, are the mind flayers who breed the oortlings as human races breed cattle. Some other cultures have found that the fluid around an oortling's brain is a useful component in the creation of many potions that deal with *telepathy* and other mental powers.

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MagiStar

by Dale A. Donovan

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Interior of Crystal Sphere surface
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	See below
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (18)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	Irrelevant
MOVEMENT:	Nil
HIT DICE:	8+8
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By spell
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to physical attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	100% to own school, nil for others
SIZE:	G (size varies)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	6,000

MagiStars are extremely rare residents on the interior of *crystal spheres* which have "stars" present on them. Not every star is a MagiStar. As a rule, there are only eight (one of each school) on any sphere that has MagiStars.

MagiStars are intelligent collections of pure magical energy of any one of the eight schools of magery. They appear as brightly colored fire-bodies with an unusual degree of activity. Flares, swirls, and even small energy whirlpools are not uncommon near them. Care should be taken by all on-deck persons to avoid being caught by one of these magical outbursts.

Most of the time, the greatest danger of being caught in a MagiStar's flare is the possibility of being knocked off the ship. The flares possess a degree of physical force, and this fact can be to the MagiStar's advantage if unwanted guests approach too closely (see "Combat").

Another troublesome aspect of too closely approaching MagiStars is the occurrence of bizarre random magical effects (pertinent to that MagiStar's school) that are noticed by the crew of a passing ship (see below).

The most important fact about MagiStars is that they are also "living gates" through the Sphere to the Phlogiston. Since they are immobile, spacefarers needn't hunt for a gate. Convincing a MagiStar to allow your ship to pass through the gate is another matter entirely.

Combat: When engaged in combat, a MagiStar can use any one spell of its school, at a rate of one per round, once a day. Unharmed by all physical attacks, including magic weapons, only magic spells can harm them. Spells from schools other than its own (and Priest spells) will affect a MagiStar normally, with appropriate saves. MagiStars save as 10th-level wizards. Spells from their own school are simply absorbed by the MagiStar, and this allows the MagiStar one extra use of any such spell per day.

As mentioned above, MagiStars' flares possess a degree of physical force, similar to a strong wind on a planet. A MagiStar can produce one flare a melee round, but cannot cast a spell on the same round it uses a flare. Under normal circumstances, the effect of a flare is identical to a *gust of wind* spell, although, technically, it is not that spell. When a MagiStar wishes to prevent a ship from approaching too closely, it can, once every 10 rounds, amplify this effect to be equal to a *wind wall* spell. Both of these effects act as if the MagiStar were a 10th-level wizard. Both types of flares have a range of 1,500 yards (three tactical hexes).

In addition to these conscious attacks, any spelljamming ship's approach to a MagiStar can cause unpredictable magical effects to take place on board. Some possible effects include: all magic items onboard that are related to the MagiStar's school begin to glow, and continue to do so until the ship moves away; a sudden drop to tactical speed, or a jump to "normal" speed, via the helm; sudden fainting spells (save vs. spells to avoid) for specialist mages of schools opposing the MagiStar's; or a +1 level to any specialist mages of the MagiStar's school for the duration of the mage's stay within the MagiStar's area of effect. Any of these effects can take place when a ship passes within three tactical hexes (1,500 yards) of a MagiStar. All of these random effects should be relatively harmless, serving more as nuisances than as harmful incidents. The DM may choose from the above examples, or may create his own, original, random effects, keeping in mind the idea that these

effects should annoy the PCs, not annihilate them.

Only two spells affect all MagiStars equally: *dispel magic* and *anti-magic shell. Dispel magic* will, if the MagiStar fails a save vs. spells, disrupt the MagiStar for 1d4 rounds. A disrupted MagiStar can cast no spells, but any random effects and flares continue. A disrupted MagiStar cannot be used as a gate. To cause all effects of being near a MagiStar to cease, an *anti-magic shell* must be cast about the ship, or between the ship and the MagiStar, allowing the ship to leave the area, and it causes all random magical effects and flares to no longer affect that ship.

Whenever a MagiStar is brought to 0 hp, it is incapacitated for 1d6 hours, during which time the gate will function. Otherwise, a MagiStar can prevent a ship from using its gate, by using its flares. Also, MagiStars serve only as one-way gates. Since none exist on the exterior of the Spheres, it is impossible to use a MagiStar to pass from the Phlogiston into a Sphere.

Some wizards, of various races, have on occasion tried to *magic jar* a MagiStar. This is normally fatal, since the sheer amount of magical energy that composes a MagiStar simply burns out the mage's mind and body.

It should be stated that even when a MagiStar is brought to 0 hit points, it is not killed (how can you kill raw magic?). The MagiStar will regenerate itself completely in the space of 24 hours, with no other harmful effects.

Habitat/Society: Solitary beings, MagiStars are philosophers, contemplating the movements of the worlds beneath them and how their magic school has effected events on those worlds. They are intensely interested in planetside events involving their school of magic; large battles, mysteries uncovered or solved, new items or spells created, etc. This is a source of pride for them, and may make negotiations for passage with them easier.

As residents living on the crystal sphere, MagiStars are also "living gates" to the Phlogiston. MagiStars can communicate with spacefarers via telepathy. Passage through the MagiStar may be purchased, but the price usually involves some magic item, spell, scroll, etc., related to the MagiStar's school. This item is then consumed by the MagiStar.

As each MagiStar is the embodiment of one school of magic, their personalities exemplify the types of mages that choose to specialize in that school. Most MagiStars are relatively secretive about their specific school of magic, as it is the key to their personalities, and is their prime point of pride.

Abjuration MagiStars consider themselves to be sensible, solid, and cautious in their dealings with other races. To many of the spacefaring races, they come across as cowardly, even paranoid. This personality trait can be used to the spacefarers' advantage, but the advantage must not be overly pressed, for if abjuration MagiStars feel *too* threatened, they could panic, and blindly attack the ship with flares and any appropriate spells. Once they do panic, it is all but impossible to calm them down (especially since most ships can't take that kind of punishment for too long).

Conjuration MagiStars have explosive personalities. They are short-tempered, overbearing, and often insulting to "lesser" creatures. Spacefarers must be prepared with scrolls or other conjuration-related magical items in order to appease their host and potential transport for their disturbance. Another thing spacefarers hoping to use the conjuration MagiStar's gate must possess is the ability to fawn and grovel convincingly.

Divination MagiStars are introspective, careful negotiators. They seldom seek more than information in exchange for passage. They do have the annoying habit of following any passage agreement they make *to the letter*. Space-farers must be masters of a carefully worded turn of phrase.

Enchantment MagiStars are self-centered and extremely vain. They are often over-confident when dealing with others. Spacefarers must be willing to sing the praises of any enchantment MagiStars if they wish passage. These MagiStars especially enjoy the talents of any bards aboard the ship desiring passage. But woe to the bard who sings off-key or even misses a single note while regaling the MagiStar of its virtues. Obviously, playing to their vanity is the key to success when dealing with these MagiStars.

Illusion MagiStars are very secretive, not very willing to give passage, unless the price involves some important secrets. They enjoy negotiating with allusions to some deep, dark, secret, making cryptic references to events or people unknown to the passengers of the ship desiring passage, forcing the ship's occupants to solve some puzzle or win a riddle contest to win passage.

Invocation MagiStars are greedy and acquisitive. Their spell selection allows them to be very confident whenever contact with spacefarers takes place. They will sometimes resort to extortion and threats of violence if they do not find the price for passage offered to be substantial enough.

Necromantic MagiStars are, naturally, very interested in death. They will take every opportunity to view it up close. Not much more needs to be said here, except that just about the only thing these MagiStars are good for is to eliminate some foe if said foe was to venture to within the MagiStar's range of effect.

Transmutation MagiStars are ready to converse with any passersby, and may not stop for months or years, holding a ship "dead" with its magical effects and flares. They are not unreasonable negotiators as long as the ship's passengers are willing to listen to the latest events on the third world of that system's latest fashions, the MagiStar's latest ideas on the theory of transmutation, or the story of the last passersby this MagiStar talked to (they still may be there), etc.

Once contact has been established, and if the MagiStar is inclined to negotiate, it may temporarily suspend its random magical effects and flares. Ships desiring passage generally stand a better chance of gaining passage if they can lure a specialist mage of the appropriate school to negotiate with the MagiStar; this is not always an easy thing to do.

Ecology: Almost nothing is known about how the MagiStars came to be, what causes magical energy to coalesce in such a manner, or what the MagiStars' relationship is to the *crystal spheres* they inhabit. One theory, completely unproven, states that the stars are the result of the phlogiston's friction against the exterior surface of the sphere.

Note that not all *crystal spheres* have MagiStars, but all of those that do also have an outpost or base of the Arcane within that sphere as well. What the relationship, if any, between the MagiStars and the Arcane is unknown at this time.

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The New Rogues Gallery

Iron Maidens

by Costa Valhouli

"The New Rogues Gallery" is a continuing feature in POLYHEDRON® Newszine *through which members may share their most interesting characters with the rest of the Network. Referees can use these characters described here for random encounters, or even build an entire adventure around them. The Newszine welcomes all member contributions for this feature.*

The Iron Maidens, an all-female professional adventuring company, was founded by Kiera several years ago. Since then, the women have made a name for themsleves. Of the original seven members, only two remain: Kiera and Lyrissa. The others were killed while on assignment for a rich merchant who betrayed them to agents of Fzoul Chembryl, their archenemy. Lyrissa offended him when she stole a valuable necklace from his personal treasury. Fzoul has offered a reward of 1,000 gp for any Iron Maiden captured alive, except Lyrissa, who has a 3,000 gp price on her head. Further, Fzoul will double the total reward if the necklace is returned as well. Kiera and Lyrissa managed to escape the trap. Later, they wreaked vengeance on the treacherous merchant and found a new member, Tiralia.

The Maidens accept almost any sort of employment: scouting, exploring, mapping, retrieving lost objects, defeating monsters, rescuing people, plotting ambushes and raids, etc. Their fees are high (usually about 8,000 gp, and double or triple that for dangerous missions).

On one adventure, the group discovered a deserted castle somewhere in the Thunder Peaks, and with their gold, restored it. The castle is a seat of luxury, and has practice rooms, sorcerous laboratories, and an immense library of ancient lore. Each member of the Iron Maidens has a single-use *amulet of recall* that *teleports* the user to the castle when it is deliberately crushed. The vaults of the fortress are rumored to contain more than 130,000 gold coins, and numerous other treasures.

The Maidens often wander the Realms, seeking adventure and wealth. They only return to their fortress to drop off treasure or to rest and recuperate from their more strenuous ventures.

Kiera

7th Level Human Female Fighter

STR: 18/21
INT: 13
WIS: 11
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHA: 17
AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 45
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Deity: Helm
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, broad sword, short sword, dagger, lasso
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, endurance (15), riding, land-based (14)
Languages: Common, Dwarven, Halfling

Magic Items: *Boots of elvenkind, broad sword +3 frostbrand (+6 vs. fire-using creatures), splint mail +2, potion of cloud giant strength* (2 doses)

Appearance: Kiera is a tall, athletic blond with attractive features. She is 27 years old, 5′ 9″ tall, and weighs 129 pounds. She usually wears loose, brightly-colored clothing with the symbol of her deity (an open, staring eye) embroidered on them. Her broadsword, Garavor, always hangs at her side.

Background: Kiera was trained in warfare from an early age, and won her first fight before she was thirteen. After going on a career of adventuring with different bands for several years, she contacted some of her old comrades (all females) and formed the Iron Maidens, a professional adventuring company. Of the original seven members, only herself and Lyrissa remain, the rest were killed during a set-up job by a rich merchant, who paid for their lives with his own, dying at the hand of Kiera herself. Recently, she enlisted Tiralia into the ranks, and they have had several successful missions together.

Kiera is a trained warrior, brave, loyal to her friends, and willing to go extreme measures to avenge her friends. She enjoys traveling and exploring.

Lyrissa

Human Female Thief/Fighter Level 6/6

STR: 17
INT: 14
WIS: 14
DEX: 16
CON: 12
CHA: 16
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 37
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Deity: Tymora
Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, dagger, crossbow, dart
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Rope use (16), disguise (16), riding land-based (14), appraising (14), running (7)
Languages: Common, Gnomish, Halfling, Thieves' Cant

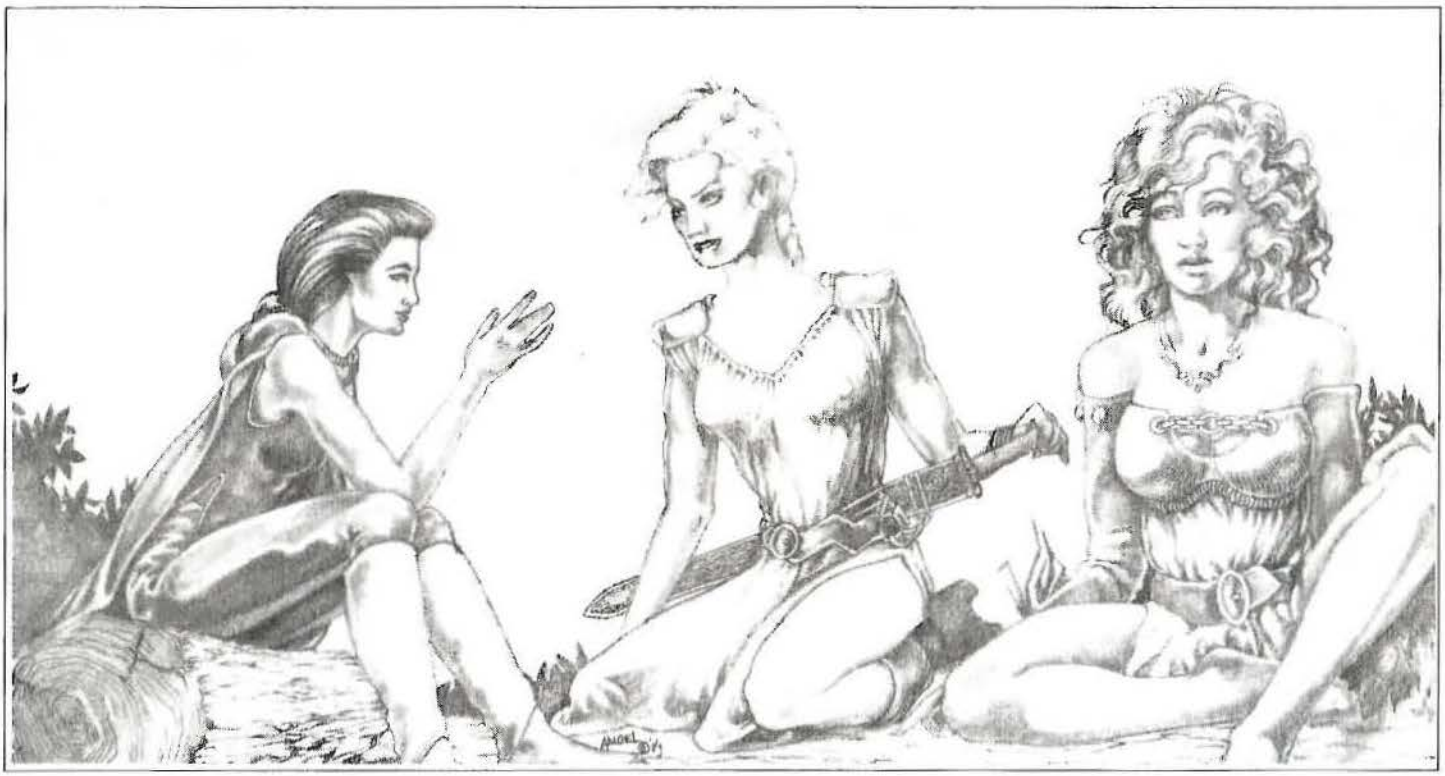
Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW
75	40	35	40	35	45	60

Magic Items: *Short sword +3, ring of invisibility, leather armor +1, potion of healing*

Appearance: Lyrissa is a brunette with tanned skin. She is slim and always in motion. She usually wears tight breeches and a tunic under a loose robe in case she wants to travel without the robe hampering her. She carries numerous disguises in her backpack. Lyrissa is 20 years old; she is 5′ 3″ tall and weighs 103 pounds.

Background: Lyrissa was born into a noble family, but ran away when her parents tried to force her into an arranged marriage. She then took up a life of thievery, becoming quite adept at making a living from picking pockets and thieving. Her greatest enemy is Fzoul Chembryl, from whose fortress she stole a gold necklace with a huge, scintillating diamond in the center (value: 12,000 gp). Unbeknownst to Lyrissa and her comrades, the necklace is magical; its powers are unrevealed. Lyrissa has not tried to fence the necklace, as she is



afraid this will give Fzoul a clue to her whereabouts.

Lyrissa is volatile, talkative, and prone to excessive spending. She is hard put to control her thieving tendencies, even though she has given up her thieving profession to become a warrior (the better to hide from Fzoul). Nevertheless, she often finds that she has some coins in her belt pouch that "weren't there before." She is an expert liar, and can mimic almost any accent.

Tiralia

6th Level Human Female Wizard

STR: 11
INT: 17
WIS: 14
DEX: 16
CON: 11
CHA: 15
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 17
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Deity: Mystra
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Spellcraft (15), riding land-based (17), reading/writing (18), religion (14), dancing (16), singing (15)

Languages: Common, Elvish, Halfling
Spells/day: 4 2 2

Magic Items: *Ring of djinni summoning, wand of magic missiles* 42 charges), *wand of fireballs* (60 charges), *ring of protection +2*

Spell Books

Level 1 Spells

Audible Glamer *Cantrip*
Feather Fall *Friends*
Shield *Read Magic*

Level 2 Spells

Alter Self *Blur*
Deeppockets *Fog Cloud*
Stinking Cloud *Wizard Lock*

Level 3 Spells

Dispel Magic *Slow*
Invisibility *Item*
10' Radius

Appearance: Tiralia has curly, shoulder-length red hair, a fair complexion, and is extremely comely. Her normal height is 5'6", but because of a spell gone awry, she is stuck at the height of 8'2". Her increased size has made her almost as strong as an ogre (18/90), and she can wield hill-giant sized weapons. She carries a nine-foot ironwood staff that is about three inches thick; this weapon inflicts 2d6+4 points of damage when it hits. Tiralia is 32 years old.

Background: Tiralia knows nothing of her parents. In her youth, she made a living among nobles as a courtesan, her exceptional beauty and form bringing in great amounts of money. Tiring of the nobles, she used her money to enter a school of magic. After staying for two years, her funds were depleted, so she became an adventurer. After returning from a long journey, she joined Kiera and the Iron Maidens. She is currently looking for a way to reverse her unnatural height while keeping her exceptional strength; she is not likely to find one, but she's hoping.

Tiralia is extremely flirtatious, and never fails to attract attention when among males. She likes using her strength and huge staff to take care of opponents, and tends to use her spells to protect herself or to improve her chances in melee.

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The Living Galaxy

The Lights Are On, But No One's Home: Part 2

by Roger E. Moore

This month, we finish the list of unmanned satellites of the future, for use with any science fiction role-playing game involving interstellar or interplanetary travel. Each satellite type is given with its nicknames and its mission profile. A brief glance at some of these notes should be enough to give most game masters a few ideas for adventure scenarios — but next issue features some extra ideas. Enjoy!

What They Do (Types L-Z)

Landsat: Satellites that locate and monitor a world's natural resources are named for one of the earliest such devices, the American *Landsat 1*. Like comsats*, landsats are unbelievably valuable; they can detect anything from hidden earthquake fault lines to outcrops of valuable metals. A good landsat system has an enormous impact on any studies of a world's oceanography, geology, hydrology, geophysics, geomorphology, ecology, climatology, cartography, and agriculture. The data a landsat gathers affects fishing, hunting, mining, forestry, manufacturing, and long-distance communication industries, and benefits disaster planning and pollution studies. Landsats can sometimes double as metsats*. Any world that has the potential for colonization or industrial exploitation will have several landsats around it.

Liftsat: The liftsat, for heavy lift vehicle (also called an HLV, lifter, space truck, transporter, or launcher) is a spacecraft with a large cargo bay that can carry one or more smaller satellites. The spacecraft is simply a robotic shuttle that carries satellites into space, sets them in their proper orbits, performs minor maintenance and check-ups, then returns for a new load. Smaller robotic spacecraft may be carried aloft by the main vehicle; these are usually tugsats*. The liftsat also is capable of picking up malfunctioning satellites (junkers*) and returning them for repair or disposal. If the liftsat must pass through an atmosphere numerous times, a streamlined, aerodynamic shape is best. On airless worlds, liftsats can be skeleton-like frameworks whose engines handle lift-off and landing.

Mediasat: A mediasat is a spysat* or landsat* run by a privately operated news and information service. As you would guess, mediasats might reveal much more than certain governments would want others to know, such as the location and appearance of all major military bases, or the movements of all military forces on a planet or in space. Some would say that though dictatorial governments have too few medisats, free societies have too many.

Metsat: Meteorological monitoring spacecraft (metsats or weather satellites) allow for fairly accurate weather predictions for days or weeks in advance. They are invaluable in disaster planning for storms, floods, droughts, and other weather-related calamities, and they can track icebergs at sea. It is not uncommon for metsats to have landsat* or science sat* functions (for civilian groups) or spysat* functions (for military groups). Military metsats aid the moving of ground, naval, and air forces, and clear the way for space launches.

Milsat: A milsat (or warsat) is any sort of satellite operated by a military force for combat or combat-support purposes —spysat*, hawk*, metsat*, comsat*, navsat*, freighter*, bombsat*, etc. Assume that almost any spacecraft function that could be performed by a live crew also can be performed by a robot, and you have an enormous range of milsat types. News on the current state of the U.S. SDI "Star Wars" program can provide further ideas, and spacegoing equivalents for modern naval and air-force craft are also possible. Robotic battle stations or fortresses could serve as supply depots for small fleets of milsats and live-crew warships, with tugsats* sent out periodically to check on individual ships. Autofacs* can churn out hundreds of hawks* and bombsats* in war-torn systems. Extensive defensive and offensive systems composed of robotic milsats can be envisioned, and violent wars could be waged without the loss of any lives — at least for a time. In areas where warsats are common, vulnerable solar panels usually are replaced by armored internal power systems such as nuclear reactors. Many milsats also have self-destruct mechanisms.

Minisat: A minisat (bug, cheapsat, lightsat) is a very small satellite, usually 10 centimeters or less across. A minisat often consists of little more than a tiny computer brain, communications gear, battery, and sensors. Very few have propulsion systems. Minisats usually perform scientific or communications work. They are cheap to build, don't last long, are cost effective, and are easily replaced if lost. They cannot contain big lenses (as used in PHOTINT spysats*) or other huge devices, so they are excluded from certain kinds of work. A related type of satellite, the microsat, is smaller than one centimeter across, and it is even cheaper and more limited in use than the minisat. Civilian microsats are often required to have radio location devices, since they might be hard to find by radar if they drift off course.

Navsat: Navigation satellites are either military or civilian in nature. They broadcast signals that allow the pilots of ground, sea, or air vehicles with properly-tuned receivers to find their exact locations and movement rates anywhere on a world. Many navsats are jam-resistant and armored in case of war, and all use extremely precise clocks. Military versions can be linked with missiles and various other attack systems for extreme accuracy. Civilian versions are often part of search-and-rescue systems for finding downed aircraft, ships in distress, lost hikers, disaster-relief teams, and other groups having radio homing beacons (as is done with some rescue sats*).

Certain navsats can be designed to reflect laser beams from ground stations, allowing for precise measurements of ground movements, such as for earthquake-detection stations. Tectonic movements of less than one centimeter can be so detected.

Powersat: These gigantic satellites are placed in geosynchronous orbits to gather solar energy and rebroadcast it as narrow-beam microwave energy to fixed antennas on the ground. Though the beaming of such enormous amounts of microwave energy might have harmful effects on wildlife (and on space crews and satellites passing through the beams), this system would still offer much to certain industrial worlds, espe-

cially those without significant atmospheres or surface life.

A powersat can be stupendously large. One real-life proposal was for a linked group of four hexagonal solar collectors with a total length of 15 kilometers. This station would continually produce up to 10,000 megawatts of power (enough to power about 130 million automobiles). Even a small colony could have fantastic amounts of energy with enough powersats. The building of powersats might prove so profitable as to be almost unavoidable.

However, powersats are delicate and would be absurdly easy to destroy in wartime. Even in peaceful areas, debris-encircled worlds might find that their powersats are regularly smashed by meteoritic particles or floating space junk. Repair work would be continuous. Worlds using powersats would also have to be in either politically secure or heavily defended systems. The loss of a world's powersats would be a terrible disaster, possibly ruining an entire civilization. Powersats are certain to be heavily defended, and interfering with one could be an act of war.

Propsat: A propsat is a comsat that broadcasts prerecorded or relayed political messages (propaganda); it is often used by a government to tell its citizens (and other nations) a particular message, such as "I'm still here!" or "I'm watching!" The propsat could also show off the emblem or colors of its government. Missions to destroy a propsat might meet with great approval from everyone but the government that put the propsat into orbit. Properly used, of course, a propsat could have enormous psychological benefits — which might make its destruction even more important to certain parties.

Rescue sat: The preparation of a manned rescue mission from scratch would probably take too long to be of assistance to most stranded or endangered spacefarers. However, robotic rescue craft ("lifesavers") could be left in orbit, each craft containing spare fuel, air, food, water, suits, tools, and equipment useful in most types of space disasters. Some rescue sats could be launched from spaceports on the ground, but a ship in orbit would be much more helpful. Rescue sats could have small reentry pods or shuttles attached to them, each full of survival equipment for planetary landings.

Navsats* and comsats* can be equipped to detect emergency locator transmitters from downed aircraft, lost explorers, and other disaster victims. These satellites (probably in polar orbits for best worldwide coverage) could form a search-and-rescue network to alert rescue units in the appropriate areas.

Science sat: Satellites designed for pure research and practical experimentation are common and offer much to their creators. Science satellites are different from applications satellites (practical-use satellites such as landsats*, metsats*, etc.) in that the former seek out the unknown, measuring and studying natural events to better understand the universe; the latter act only upon known principles, monitoring natural events so that a civilization can directly benefit from the results. It's a fuzzy distinction, certainly, but an important one. Well-established world governments often change their funding for science sats in favor of applications satellites, which offer more immediate benefits. The decrease in "pure knowledge" can have harmful side effects, as important scientific principles (with their own practical benefits) might not be discovered for long periods of time.

In general, science sats may be classified as deep-space observers, planetary observers, engineering test vehicles, and laboratories (for either biological subjects or for manufacturing goods and processes), as follows:

Deep-space observers use optical and radio telescopes, cameras, and the like to examine extremely distant objects such as moons, planets, stars, comets, nebulas, and galaxies. The recently launched *Hubble Space Telescope* is such a satellite.

Planetary observers are either orbiters (whose duties resemble those of landsats*, metsats*, and certain navsats* and PHOTINT spysats*) or landers (having robotic landing craft to study the surface and atmosphere of a planet or body). Landers usually have gear to study or retrieve soil samples, sometimes with a cargo/ascent stage for recovery of its samples. Here, the class of "planetary" observers also includes spacecraft designed to explore stars, comets, asteroids, and other bodies. Planetary observers are usually unarmed, easy-going scouts*.

Engineering test vehicles (ETVs) are prototype designs for manned or unmanned spacecraft. They might test a variety of new or improved systems, such as propulsion units, fuel supplies, computer types, etc. ETVs are likely to be guarded or protected in some way if they are military in nature.

Space laboratories contain ongoing science experiments that can be examined, retrieved, or replaced over time. Studies usually focus on the practical aspects of space flight (effects of weightlessness or radiation on plants and animals, new industrial manufacturing techniques, tests of new building materials in space, etc.). The recently recovered *LDEF (Long Duration Exposure Facility)* was a space laboratory.

Scout: A scout is simply an explorer-type spacecraft, usually having high mobility and good intelligence-gathering equipment. Civilian scouts are almost always science sats*; military scouts are almost always spysats* and might be lightly armored and armed. Military scouts often can maneuver quickly to escape pursuit and attack, allowing them to return to their bases or to transmit the intelligence they have gathered before being destroyed.

Sleeper: A sleeper is a satellite placed in orbit for future use or for back-up use in case a primary satellite is disabled or lost. The sleeper is shut down except for a monitoring system that waits for a "wake-up call" to begin its mission. Most sleepers are military satellites, primarily comsats* for use in wartime. Hawks* are sometimes sleepers, placed in enemy systems and awakened when war is declared. Some sleepers can be disguised as inoperative satellites (junkers*) and other space debris, much like operable fakesats*; some can be made to look like meteoroids.

Smuggler: Any sort of satellite can be made into a criminal smuggler, in which illegal cargoes can be deposited and removed during "routine" maintenance checks by spacecraft crews. Freighters* can smuggle hidden materials past inspection teams. Armed and mobile "defense" satellites can transfer valuable cargoes with the added luxury of legal weaponry. The sky (as the saying goes) is the limit for such activity.

Spysat: Spysats are intelligence-gathering satellites, nearly always military in nature (though there are mediasat* spys). Among spysats are four major types: ELINT (electronic intelligence) gatherers, PHOTINT (photographic intelligence) gatherers, early-warning satellites, and weapons-detection satellites. Spysats are among the most secret of all satellites, as their very usefulness is inversely proportional to the knowledge that an enemy has of them.

ELINT sats (also known as ferrets) pick up and record electromagnetic emissions from military targets, then send this data on to ground or to space receivers, or carry it directly to a drop-off point. ELINT satellites are so sensitive

that they can listen in on walkie-talkie chatter hundreds or thousands of kilometers away. Advanced ferrets can discriminate among the signals they receive, recording only those that appear to be important. Ferrets also can work against other manned and unmanned spacecraft and space stations, recording their transmissions.

Electronic countermeasures (ECM) spysats (usually called jammers) are variant ELINT satellites that are programmed to jam or block enemy transmissions on the ground or in space. An advanced ECM sat can "spoof" an enemy satellite, making its transmissions appear to result from an onboard equipment problem, so that the enemy pays no attention to whatever the spoofed satellite reports. Some ECM satellites can even take control of an externally controlled enemy satellite and cause it to self-destruct, shut down, or broadcast its transmissions to an allied receiver. An ECM satellite rarely causes the destruction of any satellite; its mission is simply to ruin lines of communication. A group of ECM sats can play merry havoc with the command structure of any military force.

PHOTINT sats (also called photorecce, photorecon, big-eye, or "Big Brother" sats) use advanced camera systems to spy upon their targets on planetary surfaces and in space. For practical game purposes, a futuristic PHOTINT sat probably can read a credit card from 1,000 kilometers away; one U.S. PHOTINT sat, *KH-11*, is said to have taken pictures that show the differences between several Iranian mullahs by the bushiness of their beards — and this was over a decade ago. PHOTINT satellites are often rigged to explode in case they are lost or tampered with (see "Bombsat").

Early-warning satellites (called tattletales or lookouts) can detect exhaust and heat emissions from missile launches or from similar weapons systems that give off a particular effect when triggered. These are useful in detecting ICBM or planet-to-space launches.

Nuclear-explosion detection satellites (having the same nicknames as early-warning satellites) pick up the telltale flashes and radiation bursts from nuclear explosions. Similar craft might be used around worlds using weapons different from the nuclear sort, if the use of such weapons could be easily detected from space.

Spysats are often either disguised as fakesats* or sleepers*, or are given stealth-type equipment and designs to prevent their detection by radar, infrared heat sensors, normal photography, etc. The best spy is the one the enemy never sees.

Spysats are invaluable for monitoring political and military treaties and for purely military espionage. Some spysats could even monitor a nation's own people if civil rebellion and disorder were feared. Aside from watching antigovernment and terrorist groups, spysats can check out criminal activities such as growing illegal crops, smuggling, piracy, and what have you. Only underground or undersea activities escape the spies in the sky.

Sunsat: A sunsat is really just an immense light bulb in space, designed to illuminate part of the surface of a planet that is too far from any star to be well lit. The sunsat is usually set to give off yellow light (like the Sun of the human homeworld, Earth), but can give off light of any color and intensity. The sunsat focuses its light using a parabolic mirror, often many tens or hundreds of meters across, and might use a translucent screen to diffuse the light and not blind spacefarers on the ground.

Sunsats are often used on unlit worlds being heavily mined or excavated. More than one sunsat can be placed in orbit at a time; a whole series of sunsats could keep a world illuminated all the time.

Trashsat: A trashsat, or debris catcher, is a gigantic unmanned satellite with few (if any) working parts. It is simply a huge object shaped like a ball, plate, or hollow cone, composed of trillions of strands of fibrous material that are meant to catch and hold small debris. Created by a specially designed autofac* that sprays out the fibrous material like a messy ball of yarn, this satellite can be tens of kilometers in diameter, floating in a heavily polluted orbit around an inhabited world. As debris strikes the trashsat, it is caught and held permanently. Objects larger than a baseball would have enough power to blast through a trashsat, but anything smaller would not. A world could have several dozen trashsats if necessary, possibly cleaning up debris left over from a major battle, orbital sabotage from bombsats*, or careless space travelers. Once a trashsat had outlived its usefulness, it could be hauled by large tugsats* into solar orbit or dropped onto the surface of an airless planet, where its metallic contents could be salvaged. An autofac could also "mine" the trashsat while the latter was still in orbit.

A debris catcher also could be used for major mining and industrial purposes. Material dug from a world's moons or from asteroids or comets could be packaged and fired through space by a catapult or mass-driver (electromagnetic rail-launch system). The material would then be caught by a giant, conical "catcher's mitt" trashsat; from there, the material would be gathered and processed for industrial use. Trashsats of this sort are usually called ore catchers.

Tugsat: Satellites in low orbit usually have difficulty staying there; normal solar wind gently pushes them toward the planet, forcing them to reenter the atmosphere as their orbits decay. If the world's sun goes through an especially active phase, solar radiation will heat the world's atmosphere, causing it to expand, and satellites in low orbit will meet increasing drag from air molecules. They slow down, fall into the atmosphere, and are destroyed. Collision with space debris or another satellite also can cause a spacecraft to change orbits or reenter the atmosphere. Erroneous commands from ground control, poor orbital insertion, malfunctioning propulsion systems, gravity from natural planets and moons, and more can also cause unwanted orbital changes.

Space debris presents a special danger to satellites orbiting worlds with heavy space traffic, particularly if space pollution has not been restrained or recognized as a problem. A poor-quality paint used on local spacecraft might tend to flake off in space, depositing billions of tiny chips into orbit; one chip, struck at the kilometers-per-second speed of a spacecraft, will crater thick metal and ruin solar panels. Debris tends to "rain down" from higher orbits to lower ones over time, so space is self cleaning — but it is a very slow process.

Even without debris problems, satellites suffer equipment trouble in the form of fading batteries, broken parts, aging components, corrosion from atomic oxygen or ultraviolet light, or cosmic radiation damage. The constant changes in temperature as a satellite passes from sunlight to darkness are known to warp thin fuel tanks and satellite shells. As technology progresses, satellite parts become obsolete and no longer mesh with more modern systems. Many dead satellites could be revived if only someone were there to fix them with the proper tools and parts.

A tugsat — also called a space tug, fixit, handyman, OTV (Orbital Transfer Vehicle), or OMV (Orbital Maneuvering Vehicle) — solves all of these problems. A tugsat is a robotic space vehicle with manipulative arms, its own propulsion

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The Everwinking Eye

A Closer Look at Maskyr's Eye

by Ed Greenwood

"The most beautiful place in all the Realms? Why, home, of course."
Dabron Sashenstar of Baldur's Gate, famous explorer; from a speech to The Merchants' League, Year of the Prince

Faerun is a big place, home to millions upon millions of beings. Some have larger and grander homes than others, but to each, as Dabron's words remind us, his or her own home is best loved of all. To the bard Randal Morn, the cave or clearing where he sleeps in the wooded heights above Daggerdale is far grander and more precious than the many-spired palaces of the richest satraps of Calimshan. Elminster of Shadowdale would not dream of trading his humble stone tower for grander Blackstaff Tower, abode of his colleague Khelben Arunsun, in rich Waterdeep. Nor does he covet the Tower of Ashaba next door, though it was his for the taking for many years. Neither Elminster nor Khelben desire the luxurious, ornate splendor of sprawling Piergeiron's Palace, down the road from Khelben's tower. To a few folk of the Realms, a farm village called Maskyr's Eye is home. We've poked around "the Eye" in the first installment of this column, but Elminster tells me in no uncertain terms that it holds much more to see yet, and that none can expect to understand the Realms who hasn't looked "under every stone, as well as over every stone."

Daily Life

The people of Maskyr's Eye lead slow and uneventful lives, dominated by hard farm work and enlivened by any travelers seen passing on the road. Winters are cold and hard; putting food by is necessary for survival. Unless one is a hunter (and there is not game enough to support another family of hunters), one has little time to explore the woods and mountains around. On evenings when the weather is dry locals gather in the taproom of The Wizard's Hand to enjoy brambleberry wine and beer, and to get news of the world from travelers. In return, locals tell tales of the vale if asked and on some nights the tales grow taller than usual. Bards are very popular with Maskyrvians, who lay down coins willingly to hear ballads and dramatic tales they've heard often before. Several traveling minstrels of the Vast are greeted in the Hand as old friends, in particular the tall, beautiful half-elven adventurer who wears black leather armor, Sshansalue "Wonderharp."

So the days and nights pass. Few travelers passing through the village think of settling there; few locals do more than dream of leaving, or even of marrying someone not of "The Eye." Most folk in the vale are content with their lot; few have the urge to live elsewhere, or to betray their friends and neighbors for monetary gain.

Maskyrvians are not yokels, however; nor are they uncurious about doings in the larger world. Anyone walking about behind the farms by day will be noticed and observed; intruders in a barn or paddock will be challenged. Such challenges sometimes lead to fights. With the mountains and woods so near, and all manner of dangerous folk riding the roads these days, there is a lot of fighting, one way or another. Maskyrvians are not slow to wield blade, club, fork, flail, or pickaxe in their own defense. Thankfully for all involved in such lively forms of social interaction, four clerics live in Maskyr's Eye: Lharathuel Hesmyr, a fourth level priest of Chauntea; her two first level acolytes, Torzhin Hulvesper (youngest son of the horse-breeder Gundul) and Jhenta Sulpir, a young lady of means who fled an unhappy arranged marriage in far-off Teziir; and the Keeper and lone priest of the shrine to Tymora. The Keeper is a "Willing Hand of the Lady" or fifth level cleric, a crippled ex-adventurer named Khonduil Ammargath. He was once a (sixth level) thief with acrobatic skills active in Iriaebor, Scornubel, and points west. Injuring his leg and forearm on the job, he was forced to crawl away from pursuers, and was not able to recover enough to use his old skills again. He is a humorous, lively old man with a love for tales of adventure. He has a knack for turning up when adventurers in the vicinity need healing spells, several hundred feet of rope, or a horse litter to be carried home on.

Tymora's shrine stands on a wooded knoll off the road just north of the vale. Khonduil lives alone in a dirt-floored hut behind it.

The House of Plenty, dedicated to Chauntea, stands next to the inn, and serves the town council as a meeting place when the inn is too crowded with paying guests for them to use its taproom.

An eerie-looking stone altar stands in a clearing in the woods west of the vale. It is a flat-topped boulder festooned with animal bones, rotting pelts, and bloodstains, and backed by a standing stone crowned by a giant stag skull with a full spread of antlers. This sinister looking place is a shrine set up by the local hunters so they could pray to Malar before long, important, or especially dangerous hunts.

There also is a lone standing stone on the southern edge of the vale, looming up at an odd angle above the rubble wall of one farm like a stern, endlessly pointing finger. To travelers who have come this way before, it marks the edge of Maskyr's Eye; to Maskyrvians, it is something sacred to the dwarves, not to be disturbed or even approached too closely. The locals call it "the Dwarfstone," although some ballads refer to it as "Durn's Finger." No dwarves have appeared in recent memory to reveal any use or reverence for the stone, but the legend is clear and emphatic, and the stone remains undisturbed.

Twice or thrice a year, dwarves come down out of the mountains to trade with men in Maskyr's Eye. They stay only four days or so, long enough for word to get to Mulmaster, and for its traders to hurry south. The Stout Folk trade knives, daggers, axeheads, bracers, and short swords of fine make in return for food, wine, clothing, lamp oil, scents, wooden barrels, pitch, and rope. For a few days Maskyr's Eye is a crowded place and those unable to get rooms at The Wizard's Hand either pay handsomely to stay at one of the farms in the vale, or camp by the roadside just north or south of the vale. Much wealth (in the way of

goods, if not coin) changes hands, and there is sometimes thievery and violence. The village elder has been called upon to do something about such problems, but as the dwarves deliberately give no advance warning of their arrival, organizing any sort of police force in time is impossible. The nearest cleric able to cast *detect lie* spells is Glauroth Mahulkyn, a priest of Gond, in Kurth.

Around the vale rise old landmarks known to the dwarves and men alike, such as Mount Wolf, other storied peaks and passes, and the grassy hills known as Beluar's Hunt. The elven warrior Beluar is well remembered in the vale for his rout of orcs of the Bloody Tongue tribe at Viperstongue Ford. Beluar and his companions-at-arms drove the orcs north and east from the battlefield as sunset came, spitting them on lances or trampling them under the hooves of their horses one by one. All that night orcs were hunted down and slain. Dawn of the next day found Beluar riding through Maskyr's Eye to slay the last of the orcs in the road outside the village smithy. The smith later reported that their armor was "terrible work . . . the metal flawed, impure, and greasy, suitable only for melting down for use in blackwork." (Blackwork is the simple everyday hardware that anyone with strength, tools, and heat enough can make, things like crude hinges, hooks, simple latches, brackets, and handles. One need not be a smith to fashion such things, but smiths make faster and better work of them than unskilled forgers.)

There is a mountain pass due east of the vale, a high and perilous cleft cut by a creek down the slopes of Mount Aergurl, that long rising peak known of old as The Sleeper In The Sunrise. Few humans today know of the pass, and the folk of the vale do not speak of it to outsiders. Orcs once came through the pass to fall upon dwarves in the delves near Kurth, but no armies have passed through it in the memory of living men. To the east of the pass high, frigid valleys fall away into the vast and cold Glacier of the White Worm. The hunters of Maskyr's Eye speak of unnatural cold east of the Sleeper.

Local legends hold that fell magic maintains the glacier, and it is true that an expedition led by the explorer Elbruin Hammertree of Baldur's Gate slew a weird "ice daemon," a sort of giant upright insect wielding a spear, while searching for a route around the glacier some seventy winters ago. Dwarven lore remembers that the dwarven hero Aurgus once single-handedly slew a remorhaz in the pass.

Current Clack

*Velsharoon (sometimes called "the Vaunted," though not to his face), is said to have gone hunting. Velsharoon is a renegade archmage of Thay, and most sages who study wizardry rank him among the most powerful archmages currently active in the Realms. A certain magical process was discovered in a very old ruin, somewhere in The Plains of Purple Dust (Raurin). It is whispered in Soorenar, where Velsharoon has one of his abodes, that this process can give (to one who successfully completes it) demigodhood and attendant great powers. Velsharoon's many enemies (notably the ruling Red Wizards and the archmages Halder of Delzimmer, Omm Hlandrar of Halruaa, The Simbul of Aglarond, and Elminster of Shadowdale) are said to be concerned for the safety and stability of the Realms (and their own persons) if Velsharoon achieves his goal.

*Kulshond, "The Mad Mage," has been seen again in Faerun after an absence of almost thirty winters. Kulshond commands magic of at least 23rd level, and is known for erratic behavior and strange spells picked up on his world-spanning travels. He is wandering Faerun, transforming merchants and noble ladies into frogs and weasels seemingly at random. He has caused a near-riot in Selgaunt by *vanishing* unwitting and unclad spouses (and the lovers they were courting at the time) into the midst of a trade-moot feast — atop the very tables where the mates of the various spouses were dining.

Kulshond does not speak aloud, whispering or murmuring instead. He keeps his face hidden by an illusion of shadows, and giggles a lot. He can *dimension door* about seemingly at will (probably through use of a magic item), and is given to *polymorphing* creatures he meets if the whim takes him. If he sees beings who interest him, he rarely appears openly, but instead sends a *watchskull* (a skull, enchanted by a spell of his own devising) floating along after them, to spy on their doings. Kulshond can see, hear, and speak through several watchskulls at a time, and often comments helpfully, or teasingly, on the deeds of the beings he is watching. Watchskulls cannot speak spells, but they can utter command words.

Watchskull: NA 1; AC 5; HD 1; hp usually 7; MV Fl 26 (A); #AT 1; Dmg 1; THAC0 20; Int Non (they only obey orders); SZ S; AL N; XP 65. A watchskull attacks by ramming into opponents.

Kulshond sometimes uses a *watchskull* to ruin spellcasting or cause a being to drop a precious item, key, lockpick, or the like, to warn people, or to do harm. He can cause a watchskull to explode, transforming it into magically-inert dust and doing 2d4 points of damage to all creatures within 10' (no saving throw).

*A strange disease, not known before, is spreading rapidly in the lands about the Vilhon Reach. It causes victims to become covered with green-white, lichen-like patches (loss of two Charisma points) that fade in 2-5 months. The Charisma penalty fades with the patches. Victims feel drowsy and weak (loss of one Strength point while the disease lasts); they are unable to concentrate or memorize anything (such as spells, names, and messages). There is no known cure as yet, save *cure disease* spells, but one alchemist — Thoround of Nimpeth — claims to have already found a use for the blood or spittle of affected humans. The fluid is useful in the formulae for writing *forget* spells; it greatly simplifies (and cheapens) the making of the requisite spell ink. Spells written with special spell inks, a different one for each spell, vanish in the usual fashion when cast directly from a spell book. But unlike spells written without such unique inks, they reappear by themselves in 3-12 days, so long as the page they were written on survives.

*A sage in Tsurlagol, Othiiyr Velthrann, claims an unidentified adventurer recently brought *Telvaran's Enchanted Blade* to him for identifying. This famous lost sword has all the powers of a *rod of lordly might*, plus more unrevealed abilities. Its present whereabouts are unknown; the human female adventurer left Othiiyr by means of a *teleport* spell, neglecting to pay Othiiyr for his sagacity. Othiiyr broke the bond of secrecy between sage and client, as is customary when a client fails to pay.

❑

Roll 'Em!

Dice Contest Winners

Our contest in issue #51 generated a blizzard of tables for use with Gamescience's new 24-sided die. Our judges plowed through lists of personal equipment, futuristic robots, secret agents, and more. Most tables were deadly serious (especially the ones about assassins), but others had a touch of whimsy. The final tallies revealed that the judges definitely preferred the latter. Here are a few of their favorites:

Excuses

by Larry McAbee (1st Place)

Many gamers also are students who will find this table useful. After a late-night gaming session, you arrive at your first class only to be greeted by that most horrible of all questions: "Ok, where is your homework?" What to do? Grab your trusty d24, roll and consult the table.

1. My dog ate it.
2. It's in my mother's/father's car.
3. My little sister/brother tore it up.
4. It was blown away by a tornado/hurricane.
5. It fell in the toilet/sink/mud.
6. I lost it/my book.
7. I left it in my friend's locker and he/she isn't here.
8. I accidentally tore it and didn't have time to recopy it.
9. We used it to start a fire to keep warm on the bus.
10. My parents made me go somewhere last night.
11. It got caught in the fan.
12. I have amnesia and can't remember where it is.
13. I used it to make an airplane for physics class.
14. Another teacher took it away from me.
15. I wrapped my chewing gum in it by mistake.
16. I loaned it to a sick friend so he/she could study.
17. I left it in the refrigerator.
18. Our house burned down last night.
19. My mom/dad took my notebook to work by mistake.
20. I ran out of paper/pens/pencils.
21. Mom used it to line the birdcage.
22. I spilled my breakfast on it.
23. I was mugged and they took my homework.
24. I didn't do it.

Larry teaches high school physics and science, and he assures us that he's heard every excuse on this table at least once.

24 ways to End a Paranoia Game

by Aaron Goldblatt (2nd Place)

1. Boom. The walls explode, killing everyone. Time to go home.
2. A group of PURGErs fill the ventilation ducts with sleeping gas. Everybody gets to take a nap, including the GM.
3. That last grenade you threw caused so much damage to valuable Computer property that your entire group has been ordered to the nearest termination center. In spite of the damage the grenade caused, it got the Commie Mutant Traitors, so there is no need to continue the mission. Time to go home.
4. The Computer, in a fit a confusion, orders the Troubleshooters to return to their home sectors, saying that the Commie Mutant Menace has been quelled by a group of Vulture Squadron troopers. There is no further need for the Troubleshooters' services at this time, so they are to go back to their barracks and take their sleepy time pills. See you next weekend, John.
5. A group of Vulture Squadron troopers, violet security, walks in on the Troubleshooters during the climactic firefight. They demand to see the Troubleshooters' authorization papers for firing laser, projectile, and plasma weapons, and for servicing algae chip machines. Of course, the Troubleshooters have none. Time to go home, due to the unfortunate demise of the Troubleshooters-turned-traitors at the hands of the Vulture Squadron, who were only performing their duty when they opened fire with that napalm machine gun.
6. The Computer, unaware that the Troubleshooters are operating in the particular sector they are operating in (failure to report movements by open commlink), turns off the lights and floods the entire area with cyanide gas. The Troubleshooters, caught without oxygen masks, die in a fit of coughing and shooting. Serves the Traitors right. Time to take a hike, Bill.
7. The Computer says, over the PA, that all Commie Mutant Traitor activity has ceased for this daycycle, so it's time to go back to your sector and take a nap. Time for the GM to do the same.
8. The Computer, suddenly unaware of the mission, orders the Troubleshooters back to the barracks. Time for you to go, too.
9. Due to some *really strange* new Commie Mutant power, time stops. Everything freezes, including the PCs' laser fire. Everything will resume during the next session, but now it's time to go home.
10. Commie Mutant Traitors, using their computer programming skills, reprogram The Computer to deny any knowledge of your mission. Since even The Computer doesn't know what the heck you're doing destroying valuable Computer property, it's time for you to visit your nearest termination center, where you will be used for target practice.
11. The GM says it's time to go home. Can you doubt the GM?
12. The Computer, in its infinite wisdom, decides that the war against the Commie Mutant Traitors has been won. Now it's time to "mop up." Scrubots, armed with the latest in automatic weaponry, begin the operation. Boom.
13. Your friend, The Computer, in its infinite wisdom, decides to recall all Troubleshooter missions. You are assigned to help train new Vulture Squadron troopers by acting as moving targets. Your new job is to dodge napalm machine gun fire for eight hours a daycycle. surely you don't think the computer has overestimated your capabilities, *do you?*
14. You have been reassigned to PLC, because of your extraordinary ability at shooting Commies. Have fun. You're now a pencil pusher. *Next!*
15. The food that the Troubleshooters last ate was laced with a sleeping

drug. It suddenly takes effect. Everybody, except, of course, the Commies, who knew of the plot, zonks out instantly. The Commies go on their merry ways, committing their nefarious deeds unnoticed. The Computer is kept busy trying to figure out why everyone is asleep two hours before the daycycle is supposed to end.

16. You've got to end a story somewhere. Why not here?
17. I've got to end a story somewhere. Why not here?
18. Your good friend, The Computer, has decided in its infinite wisdom that all Troubleshooters need re-education and happiness treatment. Since this makes for dull role-playing, why don't we quit here and go home?
19. The Computer breaks down. The Computer goes haywire. However you want to say it, the Big C goes more bonkers that it already was, if that is possible. Consequently, there is a giant electrical storm in the halls of Alpha Complex. Everyone is so dazzled by it that they forget their duties and simply stare at the flashing lights, unaware that people around them are dropping like flies from electrocution.
20. Gee, aren't you hungry? Why don't we get some tacos? You can buy, Mike. Let's go.
21. The Computer reassigns the Troubleshooters to a secret mission outdoors. It's so secret, in fact, that even The Computer doesn't know what it is.
22. Our intrepid Troubleshooters are asked if they ever have taken an SAT. If they say yes, they obviously are lying since there is no such thing as an SAT in Alpha Complex, which means they must have taken the test via Commie channels, meaning that they are Traitors. Zap kapow. If they say no, that means that they know what saying yes will mean, which means that they have taken the test. Boom poof.
23. The Troubleshooters are ordered by the Computer to read up on Commie behavior. Of course, the nearest library is over 50 miles away, there is no autocar transport, and a flybot is out of the question. You know, walking isn't too good a story, so while the PCs walk, why don't we all go out and get something to eat?
24. Gosh it's late. You know, I have to be at work in the morning. I'll bet all this Commie Mutant Traitor killing also is keeping my kids up. Oh, you have to be at work early, too? Good. Why don't we just call it a night. Oh, you want an ending? Boom. The end.

What Hour is It?

by John Bonnell (3rd Place)

1. 1:00 AM, way too early.
2. 2:00 AM, still too early.
3. 3:00 AM, too early.
4. 4:00 AM, early.
5. 5:00 AM, wake up.
6. 6:00 AM, get out of bed.
7. 7:00 AM, eat breakfast.
8. 8:00 AM, sharpen sword.
9. 9:00 AM, go out and hunt for orcs.
10. 10:00 AM, oops! Go back and get dressed.
11. 11:00 AM, now go get 'em.
12. 12:00 PM, eat lunch.
13. 1:00 PM, found orc camp.
14. 2:00 PM, attack orcs.
15. 3:00 PM, *first aid.*
16. 4:00 PM, rest awhile.
17. 5:00 PM, go to town for awhile.
18. 6:00 PM, buy supplies.
19. 7:00 PM, eat dinner.
20. 8:00 PM, head home.
21. 9:00 PM, clean sword.
22. 10:00 PM, go to sleep.
23. 11:00 PM, oops! Get undressed.
24. 12:00 AM, asleep at last.

Idiot's Delight

by Britt Garcia (Honorable Mention)

1. *Roll Again*
2. *Roll Again*
3. *Roll Again*
4. *Roll Again*
5. *Roll Again*
6. *Roll Again*
7. *Roll Again*
8. *Roll Again*
9. *Roll Again*
10. *Roll Again*
11. *Roll Again*
12. *Roll Again*
13. *Roll Again*
14. *Roll Again*
15. *Roll Again*
16. *Roll Again*
17. *Roll Again*
18. *Roll Again*
19. *Roll Again*
20. *Roll Again*
21. *Roll Again*
22. *Roll Again*
23. *Roll Again*
24. *Roll Again*

Space Ship Malfunction Table

By John Bonnell (Honorable Mention)

1. Toilet backs up. Repair time, 1d24 hours
2. Hyperdrive fails (if there is no hyperdrive, see #3. Repair time 1d24 days.
3. Food processor jams and will create only margaritas. Repair time, 1d24 months.
4. Computer has a religious experience and refuses to take orders from lesser beings. Repair time, 1d24 hours.
5. Heating system shorts out and temperature begins dropping. Repair time 1d24 minutes.
6. View screen goes out. Repair time, just hit it.
7. Sensors show 120' tall hand/fist on collision course with ship. Repair time 1d24 minutes.
8. Entertainment center malfunctions and only will get PBS. Repair time 1d24 hours.
9. Computer has a mental breakdown and wishes to take the ship to a happier place. Repair time 1d24 days.
10. Automatic doors begin operating in reverse. Repair time 1d24 hours.
11. Artificial gravity reverses (if no artificial gravity, see #3). Repair time 1d24 hours.
12. Meteor strikes the ship and decompresses one compartment. Repair time, 1d24 hours.
13. Computer goes dead. Repair time 1d12 days.
14. Food processor malfunctions and produces 200 pounds of jellybeans. Repair time, none (just a quirk).
15. An electrical fire destroys all video tapes except *Big Top PeeWee.*
16. The computer replaces alarm bell with a horrific scream.
17. Radio chatter becomes so great the communitions officer freaks out and runs through the ship yelling "don't panic!"
18. All information in the data base is replaced with nursery rhymes.
19. Garbage disposal clogs. Repair time, 1d24 minutes.
20. Power plant fails to restart after someone tries to "fix" it.
21. Micro creatures from another dimension cause effects #1-20 Repair time, destroy the creatures.
22. The ship drifts through a cloud of radioactive debis and everyone is killed/mutated. Repair time, varies with game system.
23. Reroll twice on this table, ignoring rolls greater than 21.
24. Reroll three times on this table, ignoring rolls greater than 20.

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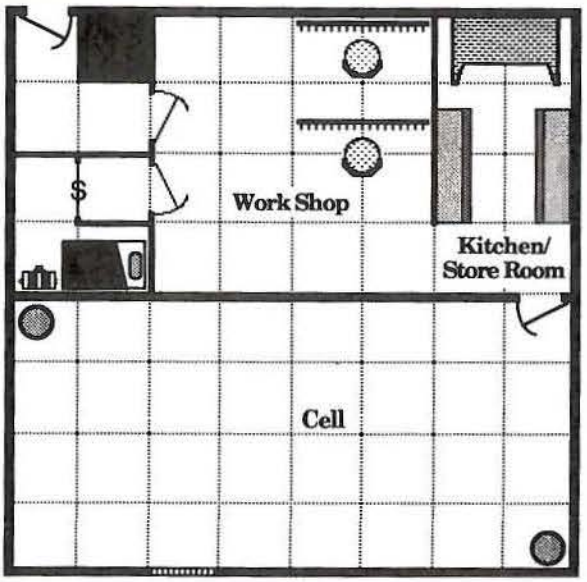
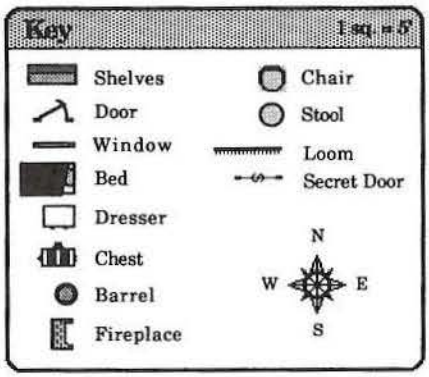
The Living City

Shrine of Honest Toil





by Thomas Kane

Loan sharks know how to collect bad debts, such as making the proper threats and breaking a debtor's limb or two. However, honest moneylenders cannot be so direct and must rely on methods approved by Ravens Bluff's government. Because Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane wants to treat indigents humanely, while ensuring that the loans are repaid, the city runs a workhouse where all defaulters must labor until they earn what they owe.

A merchant named Brockborten manages the workhouse. When someone defaults on a loan, Brockborten pays the debt, and the debtor owes Brockborten slave labor until he has recovered the loan — plus a 5 percent fee for Brockborten. The city calls its workhouse, "The Shrine of Honest Toil," and this amuses Brockborten, inspiring him to take the nickname "Priest."

The exterior door of the Shrine is whitewashed and unlocked. But just past it visitors find another, thicker door made of great oak beams reinforced with iron. Beyond this door debtors live in a stone-lined room with no furniture except two barrels, one for drinking, the other for sewage. Each debtor has one blanket. There is one window, and although Brockborten forbids begging, the debtors often manage to collect charity through the bars. The building also has several workrooms which have been furnished with primitive weaving looms. Any prisoners who Brockborten cannot rent to a businessman will be working on the looms, weaving gray woolen cloth that is used in Ravens Bluff's city guard uniforms. This weaving work does not help people pay off their debts.

Anyone who is a resident of Ravens Bluff can buy services from debtors in the Shrine. In theory, these jobs eventually will allow all debtors to pay what they owe, pick up new employment skills, and give Brockborten his profit. Naturally, Brockborten wants to keep his workers — the more workers he has, the greater his personal profit. So, Brockborten scrutinizes everything his prisoners do, looking for poor behavior and shoddy workmanship which allows him to tack fines onto people's debts. He fines debting offenders a copper piece for such "crimes" as gossiping during work or showing disrespect of any sort. Fines of one silver are reserved for poor quality work, falling asleep on the job, or cursing at Brockborten or their temporary employers. The fines are not always enough to keep the prisoners enslaved, so Brokborten operates a bar, at which the debtors can "purchase" drinks in exchange for adding to their debt. Of course, nearly all the debtors eventually make use of the bar, hoping the ale will help them wash away their troubles.

There are usually four to 40 people imprisoned here. Some are unfortunate merchants, a few are low-level adventurers, others are lifelong beggars. Most, however, are simply poor people who owe money to someone. Occasionally, one of these debtors will have an interesting story which could lead player characters on an adventure.

Sometimes the Shrine holds inmates who owe no debts. Kingpins of crime are occasionally kidnapped and enslaved here on forged charges of failure to pay debts. Outlaws have hidden in the Shrine of Honest Toil, disguising themselves as mere debtors. Some of these have bribed Brockborten into releasing them after a time, others become trapped here, as he continually fines them for bad behavior.

The Shrine of Honest Toil employs

only a few guards; these are 1st level fighters. If Brockborten needs more muscle, his friends in the thieves guild will provide up to six first level fighters and up to eight second level thieves. If player characters thwart Brockborten's dealings, high-level thieves will surely seek revenge.

A small closet in the back of the workhouse conceals the door to Brockborten's quarters. He stores his wealth under a straw bed: 1,300 gp and a *figurine of wondrous power*, an *onyx dog* which he got as payment from a wizard.

The *dog's* name is Brufus, and this is also its command word. Brufus' statistics are: AC 6; MV 12"; HD 2+2; hp 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N.

PCs who find themselves imprisoned in the Shrine should be able to escape easily. A thief can pick the locks, for example, or a fighter could break down the door. Brokborten sleeps soundly at night. However, if Brokborten discovers that debtors have escaped, he tracks them with his *figurine of wondrous power*.

Although most PCs will be rich enough to avoid labor in the Shrine of Honest Toil, a ruinous adventure could land them here — so could an influential enemy. Brockborten's plots and friends might bring him into a campaign, or the PCs might even find themselves hiring his debtors.

Brockborten

6th Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 16
INT: 10
WIS: 13
DEX: 15
CON: 11
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 9
Hit Points: 53
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Dwarvish

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, sap, sling, whip, morning star
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blindfighting, endurance (11), gaming (16), rope use (14)
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0, amulet of proof against detection and location*

Appearance: Brockborten, who stands 5'8" tall and weighs 185 pounds, is always seen wearing studded leather armor (just for looks), and toting a long sword and sap. As the 34-year-old moves through the city he bows to the ladies and smiles at everyone. However, his sense of humor and charming disposition seem in opposition to his profession.

Background: Although Brockborten was born in Daggerdale, he spent most of his life in the area around Ravens Bluff, adventuring with an unscrupulous band of ruffians. When the wizard in the group started making plans to summon extra-planar creatures, Brockborten wisely took his leave and sought work in the city. He has operated the Shrine for the past five years, keeping his evil nature hidden from city officials because of his *amulet*. He keeps his records straight, his nose reasonably clean, and treats city officials with respect. In turn, Ravens Bluff officials have had no reason to look into the Shrine's operation.

Brockborten shows no consideration for his debtors' morale. He worries about their physical conditions only because unhealthy debtors cannot labor and present him with his 5 percent return. He walks through the debtors' room often so he can catch his charges doing something wrong and fine them to lengthen their stay. He enjoys telling the debtors obscure, off-color jokes. They learn to laugh at his jokes and speak fondly of him; he fines anyone who refuses to.

Brockborten is proud of his business and feels almost justified in fining his charges. He has also become quite rich because of the Shrine. Thieves and assassins from across the city use his Shrine of Honest Toil to hide kidnapped victims —by paying a fee to Brockborten, of course. And it serves as a source of labor for their schemes. Brockborten often tells the thugs when debtors will be released, and the thugs are quick to grab them as they leave the Shrine.

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Continued from page 23

system and power supply, and numerous cameras and remote sensors. It is designed to catch and boost satellites in deteriorating or faulty orbits, leaving them to continue their missions. A tugsat can also do repair work on broken satellites, guided by onboard AI computers or by controllers on the ground through remote-control systems. The tugsat would repair or replace parts and systems. Tugsats could double as tanker-type freighters* if some satellites used fuel tanks.

Obviously, huge corporations that make lots of satellites would probably rely on standardized parts and connections, and those companies might also make tugsats for use specifically with their own satellites. It's as if Toyota and Ford made mobile garages that traveled around the country, repairing damaged cars of their particular brands. But could you have your Mercedes repaired by one of them? You can consider the implications in your own campaign if starships and satellites are made by rival corporations.

In some cases, a tugsat could also catch unrepairable junkers* and deliberately drop them into a planet's atmosphere to be destroyed. This sort of clean-up job could keep space tugs permanently employed as garbage collectors around heavily visited worlds with dangerous belts of debris left over from civilian or military ventures. Some satellites might contain dangerous materials, such as nuclear fuel (especially plutonium), weapon systems, or potentially explosive chemical fuel tanks. These satellites would be best disposed of by tugsats, which could remove hazardous materials or else tow the dangerous satellites away.

Aside from scavenger, salvage, and repair services, a tugsat also could inspect various satellites as a sort of watchdog for police or military forces hunting for potentially unfriendly spacecraft, such as bombsats*, fakesats*, hawks*, sleepers*, and spysats*. Cheap tugsats could form part of a world's first line of orbital defense.

Your Mission Is:

Given the enormous number of satellite types, there is also a large number of missions PCs could be given that closely involve one or more types of robotic craft. Some of these missions are given in general detail in the following sections. Keep in mind the possibility that a mission might be carried out without the PCs being physically present; they could be using remote-controlled tugsats*, hijackers*, or hawks*, for instance, with their own ship staying well back from any dangers.

Deployment: The PCs are hired to pilot a spacecraft into orbit (or elsewhere in the local solar system) and deploy one or more satellites. The PCs must ensure that the satellites are set up in their proper orbits and are fully operational. Repair work might be needed if a satellite is damaged before or during deployment. Crews should have insurance against mission failures, and they should be aware of legal and security problems inherent in their missions. A specialist in satellite deployment might be sent along with the PCs.

Problems: A satellite might be damaged before or during deployment, either from carelessness, poor equipment, or sabotage. Legal problems from a failed mission could dog the PCs for a long time. An unusual discovery might be made about the nature of one of the satellites (i.e., it isn't what it seemed to be — a fakesat*). Encounters might be made with hijackers*, pirates, and police or military ships.

Investigation: The PCs are hired to investigate an unmanned spacecraft, either as a routine mission or as a special assignment because the satellite is acting oddly. The mission could be either public or secret, involving private, law-enforcement, criminal, political, or military backers. Note: The PCs are not expected to steal or destroy the craft they are investigating, unless their orders dictate otherwise in certain circumstances.

Problems: The party owning the inspected satellite might object to having anyone spy on it, if the PCs were hired by another party. A check-up on a satellite might reveal all sorts of oddities, such as the satellite's real mission (if it is a fakesat*), the presence of sabotage, memorial devices, oddly made parts or designs, nonfunctional decorations (religious or superstitious additions), time capsules, or unexpected defects causing special problems (like radiation leaks or radio interference). The satellite might be hostile and able to attack its inspectors, too.

Alteration: The PCs are hired to repair, alter, or upgrade a satellite —one that is usually but not necessarily malfunctioning. If the satellite cannot be fixed, it might need to be either brought to a repair station or else destroyed in some manner. The proper tools and skills are needed to perform any maintenance or alteration actions.

Problems: Security devices, explosives, and onboard weaponry of the satellite must be considered. The wrong choice of tools or a failed skill roll could also complicate things enormously. This sort of mission also could include subtle sabotage, which would be highly illegal (or at least unappreciated). The nature of the malfunction on the satellite might also be a problem in itself (radiation hazard, radio jamming, explosive fuel tanks, etc.).

Recovery: The PCs are hired to recover a satellite, bringing it to a certain location where the satellite can be repaired, studied, or held for ransom. The mission might be sponsored by a salvage or repair company, a "space cleaning" firm that gets rid of junkers*, criminals who want to hijack a costly satellite, military groups that want to inspect a possible enemy vehicle, and so forth. Repo men who pick up stolen or misused satellites would find a rich field of work in star systems having lots of criminal activity.

Problems: Illegal recovery of a civilian satellite is piracy; illegal recovery of a military satellite is an act of war. The satellite might not want to be recovered, either, if it is self-aware but mad, or else guided by a third party not willing to give up the satellite.

Destruction: The PCs are hired to destroy an unmanned satellite. The satellite might be a rogue hawk* that is attacking peaceful shipping, an old bombsat*, an enemy spysat*, a criminal hijacker*, an obnoxious adsat*, or a dangerous junker*. The PCs might not be able to just blast the satellite, if that would create a debris hazard; they might have to recover the satellite and drop it into a world's atmosphere or onto an uninhabited moon. Partial sabotage might be required, however, to neutralize hazardous or unwanted functions of a large vehicle or to leave a sort of warning to the satellite's owners.

Problems: The target satellite might be so dangerous that it endangers any PCs who get near it. Destroying the satellite might be considered an act of war by the government that owns it, so the mission would have to make the satellite's loss appear to be an accident. The satellite might have unexpected abilities, or it might be guarded by other satellites. The satellite might even be able to self-destruct if disturbed.

Last Words

The more people you meet, the more interesting your life will become — that is essentially the reasoning behind this extensive look at unmanned satellites. These encounters can enliven any campaign both with meetings of minor interest and with major adventures. Most importantly, their use adds to the feel of realism to a campaign, giving richer life to your end of the living galaxy. ❑

Letters

Continued from page 5

bership packet, "Through this organization and its channels of communication, gamers can get in touch with others who share their interests . . . The RPGA Network gives gamers a chance to share their ideas, creations, and gaming experience with other fans." From *Notes From HQ* in the introductory Newszine: "As a Network member you will be able to compete in RPGA Network sanctioned tournaments which are held at conventions throughout the world." From the Newszine, Volume 1, Issue 3, *Where I'm coming From* by Frank Mentzer (then editor):

> "Meeting new people is easier and faster when those involved share a common interest . . . . The RPGA Network has the most potential for bringing organized gaming to the most individuals . . . . We're doing our part. Are you? Communicate; participate; enjoy."

From the above it is obvious that RPGA Network activities are meant to be open to members. Network events are meant to be held at public gatherings, not at private parties.

A "convention" that is held with attendance by invitation only is not really a convention, no matter what title it is given. It is a private party, no different than the many weekly gaming sessions attended by Network members around the world. NECCC certainly supports the right of members to have a group of friends over for gaming, but we feel that such private games should not receive Network sanctioning.

NECCC supports the holding of tournaments such as Masters and Grand Masters level events, Regional Championships, and Team Tournaments. Note that while these events have restricted entry, they are restricted to categories of members and have explicit, objective, and known entry requirements. NECCC opposes the sanctioning of events that have entry restricted by personal invitation only.

While the RPGA Network has no right to tell people how to run their convention or private party, the Network has not only the right but the responsibility to see that its members are not discriminated against by those who run sanctioned events. We hope that the Network will cease sanctioning of events for conventions which discriminate against Network members.

NECCC
Sherman, CT

Here at HQ we appreciate both your concern about this subject and your sensitivity to what the Network really is about. Nevertheless, the RPGA Network has a very simple set of requirements for holding a sanctioned event. They are:

1. *Network HQ must know in advance where and when the event will be held, who the organizers are, and how many participants are expected to attend. (This is best done by using one of our Tournament Request Forms.)*
2. *The event must use a scenario that HQ has reviewed and approved in advance.*
3. *The Network's procedures for choosing winners and awarding prizes must be used, and a properly completed scoring packet for each game must be returned to HQ within a reasonable time.*

There are no other requirements, and we don't think there should be any. The current request-and-approval process is sufficiently tedious to keep individual game masters from trying to turn their campaigns into sanctioned events. HQ certainly has the "right" to add additional requirements or to make subjective judgments about what really constitutes a "convention," but at present we see no need to do this. At HQ we let the people who do the work make the decisions involving their own conventions. We agree that holding a convention with limited attendance and picking and choosing who will be allowed to participate could irritate some gamers. After all, there are many ways to limit attendance — opening registration to a fixed number of people and taking registrations on a first-come-first-served basis is the fairest and most objective method. However, if a gatherings' organizers want to take a different approach, so be it; they are the ones investing time, effort, and cash in the convention.

Even if we were inclined to prohibit invitation-only conventions there would be no practical way to enforce the rule. There have been numerous small shows that only were advertised through direct mailings or word-of-mouth; HQ has no way to tell if such limited publicity was accidental or intentional. Furthermore, as the letters from John Goin (issue #54) and Hannes Hogni Vilhjalmsson (this issue) point out, some members aren't going to get to participate in the tournament program at all unless the Network starts offering more "non-convention" tournaments.

By their very nature, tournaments promote communication between members and uphold the Network's goals. To be sure, some events do these things better than others, but we shouldn't try to stamp out events that are held under less than ideal circumstances. It would be nice if every tournament was perfect, but failing that we'll take what we can get.

Finally, as with most issues involving the Network, it is the members who have the last word. If everyone feels the way NECCC does, invitation-only conventions won't be able to generate enough attendance to survive, and they'll die off or open their doors to the general membership.

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Bookwyrms

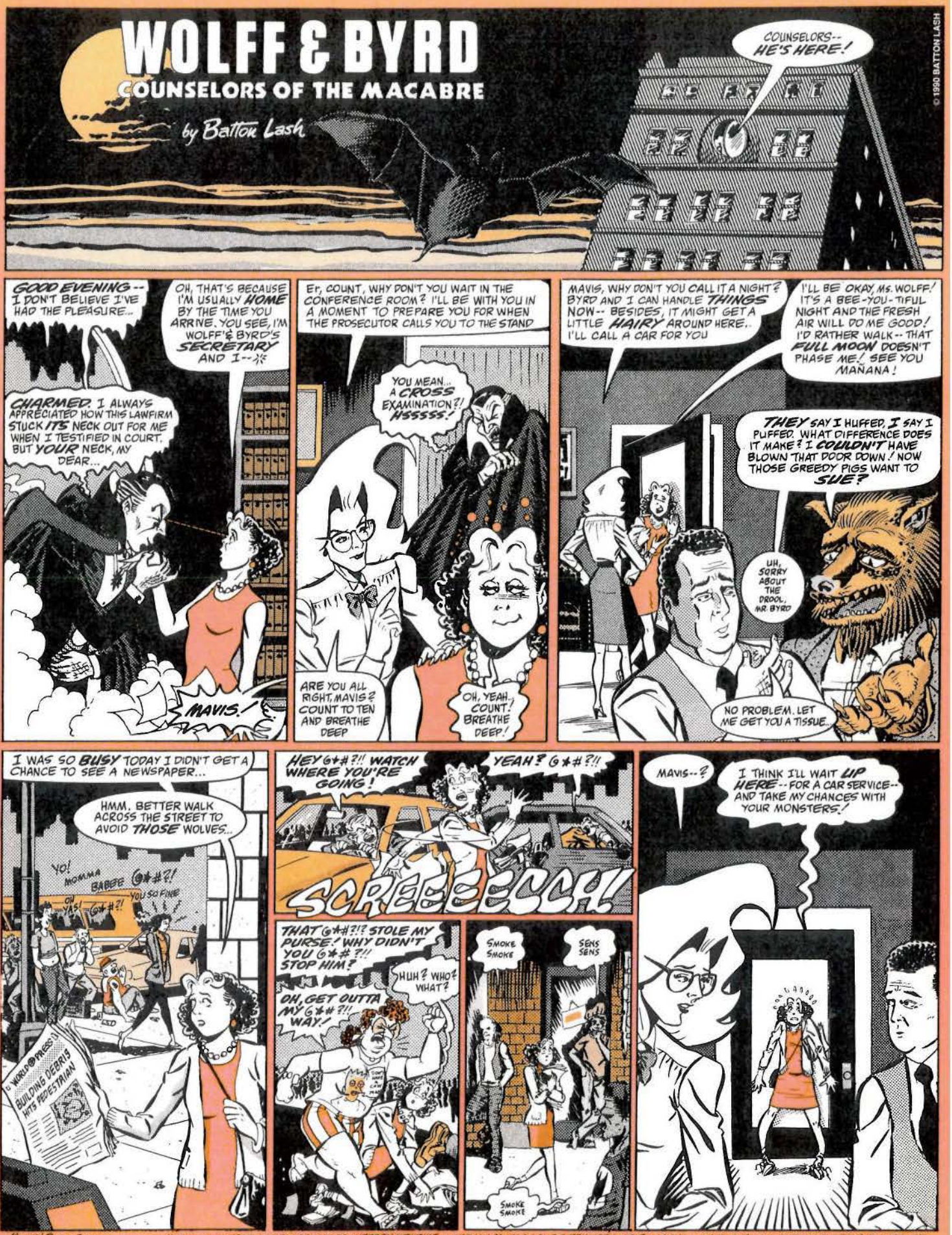
Continued from page 8

Both of these original novels could be a great starting point for a science-fiction RPG campaign. Della, the thinking robot from *Warsprite*, and Commander Ian S. MacKenzie from *Outbanker* are great models for SF non-player characters (or, with a little work, fantasy NPCs).

The third SF novel in this year's TSR Books line-up will also spark your imagination. In the December release, *The Alien Dark*, Diana Gallagher creates an intriguing alien race — the *ashin bey* —and chronicles their search for an uninhabited world suitable for colonization. The *bey* are aliens in appearance —which is somewhat feline — and in the way their minds approach and solve the most simple problems. Some of you may already be familiar with Diana Gallagher's work; she recently won a prestigious Hugo Award for her artwork. After *Alien Dark*, she will be known as a first-rate author, too.

In all, the TSR Books line has produced some fine novels. Whether you're interested in fantasy — like Nancy Varian Berberick's compelling *The Jewels of Elvish* — dark future science fiction — like *Too, Too Solid Flesh* by Nick O'Donohoe — or even off-the-wall SF humor — like *Illegal Aliens* by Nick Pollotta and Phil Foglio — we have something for you. All the books are the products of creative people and filled with great characters and plots. In each, you'll find the basis for dozens of NPCs, random encounters, even kick-off points for your campaigns.

All you need to do is grab a copy of any TSR Books release, and you'll find yourself whisked away to a whole new world of fantasy, science fiction, horror, and mystery. ❑


WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE
by Batton Lash
COUNSELORS-- HE'S HERE!
© 1990 BATTON LASH
GOOD EVENING-- I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE...
OH, THAT'S BECAUSE I'M USUALLY HOME BY THE TIME YOU ARRIVE. YOU SEE, I'M WOLFF'& BYRD'S SECRETARY AND I--
CHARMED. I ALWAYS APPRECIATED HOW THIS LAWFIRM STUCK ITS NECK OUT FOR ME WHEN I TESTIFIED IN COURT. BUT YOUR NECK, MY DEAR...
MAVIS!
Er, COUNT, WHY DON'T YOU WAIT IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM? I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MOMENT TO PREPARE YOU FOR WHEN THE PROSECUTOR CALLS YOU TO THE STAND
YOU MEAN.. A CROSS EXAMINATION?! HSSSSS!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MAVIS? COUNT TO TEN AND BREATHE DEEP
OH, YEAH.. COUNT! BREATHE DEEP!
MAVIS, WHY DON'T YOU CALL IT A NIGHT? BYRD AND I CAN HANDLE THINGS NOW-- BESIDES, IT MIGHT GET A LITTLE HAIRY AROUND HERE.. I'LL CALL A CAR FOR YOU
I'LL BE OKAY, MS. WOLFF! IT'S A BEE-YOU-TIFUL NIGHT AND THE FRESH AIR WILL DO ME GOOD! I'D RATHER WALK-- THAT FULL MOON DOESN'T PHASE ME! SEE YOU MAÑANA!
THEY SAY I HUFFED, I SAY I PUFFED. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? I COULDN'T HAVE BLOWN THAT DOOR DOWN! NOW THOSE GREEDY PIGS WANT TO SUE?
UH, SORRY ABOUT THE DROOL, MR. BYRD
NO PROBLEM. LET ME GET YOU A TISSUE..
I WAS SO BUSY TODAY I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO SEE A NEWSPAPER...
HMM. BETTER WALK ACROSS THE STREET TO AVOID THOSE WOLVES...
YO! MOMMA BABE G*#?!
OH YAS! G*#?!
YOU SO FINE
WORLD PRESS: BUILDING DEBRIS HITS PEDESTRIAN
HEY G*#?!! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
YEAH? G*#?!!
SCREEEECH!
THAT G*#?!? STOLE MY PURSE! WHY DIDN'T YOU G*#?!! STOP HIM?
OH, GET OUTTA MY G*#?!! WAY!
HUH? WHO? WHAT?
SMOKE SMOKE
SENS SENS
SMOKE SMOKE
MAVIS--?
I THINK I'LL WAIT UP HERE-- FOR A CAR SERVICE-- AND TAKE MY CHANCES WITH YOUR MONSTERS!

WOLFF & BYRD, COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE APPEARS REGULARLY IN POLYHEDRON NEWZINE, AMERICAN FANTASY AND EVERY WEEK IN THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL AND BROOKLYN PAPER PUBLICATIONS

Conventions

Falcon 90, September 8th
This one-day event will be held at the Ramada Inn in Danbury, CT. The game sessions feature *The Ivory Elf*, a three-round RPGA™ Network scenario. Each round will be run as a separate scenario, and all participants will play in all three sessions. Seating is limited and entrance will be by pre-registration only. The cost is $10.00. Write to: Falcon, P.O. Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784. Please indicate if you plan to attend as a: player only, player/DM, or DM only. Falcon is a production of ConnCon, Inc.

The 20th Emperor's Birthday Game September 8th
This one-day gamefest will be held at the Century Center in downtown South Bend, IN. Events include several Napoleonics miniatures games, a Network AD&D® game tournament, and many others. The door fee is $7.00. For pre-registration information contact Bob Haggerty at 227 North 2nd St. Apt. G, Elkhart, IN 46516, 219-293-4398.

Lehicon III, September 21st-23rd
The Easton Sheraton Inn in Easton, PA, is the site of this convention which features events for both editions of the AD&D game, RPGA Network AD&D game tournaments, Car Wars, Battletech, Harpoon, war games, and role-playing games of all sorts. Write to: Lehicon III, P.O. Box 1864, Bethlehem, PA 18016-1864.

Council of Five Nations 16, October 5th-7th
Enjoy a wide selection of events at the USA's third oldest game convention. Activities include role playing, board gaming, costume contest, miniatures painting contest, and more. Network guest Jean Rabe will present seminars, and there will be a sit-down Network breakfast and several first-run tournaments. For more information write: Schenectady Wargames Association, ATTN Paperwork Coordinator, P.O. Box 9429, Schenectady, NY 12309-0429

2nd Austrian Gamers Meeting, October 6th-7th
Come meet with us at the Pfarre Rudolfsheim in Vienna, Austria. Game offerings include a Network AD&D game tournament and a Paranoia Tournament. For more information write: Andreas Mitterlechner, Meiselstr. 24/16, 1150 Vienna, Austria.

Rock-Con XVI, November 3rd-4th
Join us for a weekend of gaming at the Rockford Lutheran High School. There will be a large exhibit hall, miniatures, wargames, an auction, and RPGA Network events, including an AD&D game benefit tournament. Judge inquiries welcome. Judges volunteering to run RPGA Network events should contact Network HQ soon. The entrance fee is $5.00 for the weekend. Write to: Rock-Con, c/o Blackhawk Dist., 14225 Hansberry Road, Rockton, IL 61072.

UMF-Con, November 3rd-4th
Beat the snow to the University of Maine by coming to the Farmington Student Center for our latest episode of AD&D games, miniatures, war games, GAMMA WORLD® games, TOP SECRET/SI™ games, and contests. The Pre-registration fee is $5.00 for the weekend or $3.00 a day. All games have a $2.00 table fee. Bedroll space is available on Friday and Saturday nights for $3.00 a night or $5.00 for both nights. Write to: Table Gaming Club, Student Center, 5 South Street, Farmington, ME 04938.

European GEN CON® Game Fair, November 30th-December 2nd
The Camber Sands Holiday Centre, on the southeast coast of England, is the site for this major gaming event. Activities include Network tournaments, including a benefit event, art demonstrations, auction, miniature painting demonstrations, seminars, and autograph sessions. Guests include fantasy artist Larry Elmore and game designer Tom Wham. For information contact: TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, England.

Winter Fantasy, January 4th-6th, 1991
You are invited to attend the RPGA Network's own convention. First-run Network events include AD&D® game Grand Masters, Masters, Feature, and Benefit; other events include Paranoia, SPELLJAMMER™ game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, and more. Judge and exhibitor inquiries welcome. See the pre-registration form on the back mailer cover of this magazine for more details.

ConnCon 91, April 6th-7th, 1991
This convention will be held at the Danbury Hilton Inn in Danbury, CT. Many first-run RPGA Network events will be held, including Masters and Grand Masters tournaments. There will be role-playing games, miniatures battles, war games, an awards banquet, a Network members' meeting, and more. Jean Rabe, RPGA Network Coordinator, will be joining us again as guest of honor and will once again present a few seminars. Pre-registration will be mailed at the end of January. The pre-registration fee includes three free games and is $15.00 before March 22nd. After March 22nd the fee is $20.00 with no free games. Write to: ConnCon, P.O. Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784. To reserve a room at the Hilton, call 203-794-0600 and be sure to mention ConnCon.

Attention Convention Coordinators:
If you would like to have your convention listed in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, send us the information six months in advance. This should allow us to list your convention in at least one issue. Necessary information includes the dates, times, and location of the convention; activities planned, including tournaments, masquerade, dealers room, etc; fees; and where people can write for more information or to pre-register.

To aid in listing your convention, Network HQ has convention announcement forms. These are available by writing to us at: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147.

WINTER FANTASY, 1991

January 4th-6th

The Ramada Inn Airport, Milwaukee, WI

Featuring Network Sanctioned Events:

AD&D® Game Grand Masters	Torg
AD&D Game Masters	Star Wars
AD&D Game Feature	Paranoia
AD&D Game Benefit	Chill
MARVEL SUPER HEROES	Timemaster

In addition, the convention features:

Board Games
Miniatures Events
Axis & Allies Tournament
DAWN PATROL® Tournament
Role Playing Sessions
Dealers' Area
Open Gaming

The Ramada Inn is offering special rates for convention goers. To make a reservation, call toll free at 1-800-272-6232 or call 414-764-5300 Be sure to mention Winter Fantasy

All gaming is free -- except for the benefit tournament, which requires a $5.00 donation. Games are available on site on a first come, first served basis. Network members can pre-register for role-playing tournaments.

COSTS: At the door -- $15; Pre-registration -- $12; Pre-registration for Network Members -- $10; For judges running three or more sessions -- $7

For a $2 fee, Network members can pre-register for up to four tournaments.

Pre-registration closes November 30, 1990

Name:_____
Address:_____
_____
_____
Home Phone:_____
Work Phone:_____

I have indicated below the four tournaments I want to be pre-registered for.

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ **Yes! I would like to go to the Network Sunday brunch. I have included $10.00 to cover the cost of this delicious, warm repast.**

I volunteer to judge. I know these game systems:

_____
_____
_____

Send registration to Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI., 53147
Enclose a check or money order for the correct amount.

Classifieds

Connecticut Desperately seeking DM. Looking for an AD&D® game group to join. I'm 25 years old, have been in Connecticut for one year, and now I know how Arthur Dent must have felt. Please write Curtis Price, P.O. Box 4821, Waterbury, CT 06704.

Colorado Wanted: AD&D game players to undertake gallant quest. Inquire with Chris Simpson, 633 S. Ivy Way, Denver, CO 80224 303-333-6749.

Georgia Serious DM and player looking for other players in the Athens, Decatur, or other areas to join or DM for beginners. Also looking for pen pals from the U.S. or overseas. Expert in the D&D® game, AD&D game, and FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting. I've been a player for four years and a DM for five years. All ages welcome. All letters will be answered, too. William Poole, Rt. 3 Box 533A, Athens, GA 35611 or call 205-232-9316.

Maryland I'm a DM in the Washington DC area seeking players 18 and over for a low level AD&D game campaign set in the pre-Christian Byzantine Empire. Players interested in chucking medieval squalor for the splendors of Constantinople should call Richard Donnelly at 301-251-8643 Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Massachusetts I'm a Player/DM looking for a group in the North Shore or Boston area. I play the AD&D game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, Rolemaster, Thieves Guild, GURPS Supers, as well as several Avalon Hill games. I'm willing to DM for a consistent group. Doug Smith, 16 Breed Street, Apt. 3, Lynn, MA 01902.

Missouri I'm a 26-year-old DM looking for players in the eastern Kansas City/Blue Springs area. I have seven years experience in the AD&D game. The campaign I'm starting will use AD&D 2nd Edition rules and will be set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS fantasy setting. Contact Denny Jones, 612 Sunnybrook Dr., Blue Springs, MO 64014 816-224-6469.

New Hampshire Small gaming group in Keene area seeks more players. We meet weekly at the Newman Center for AD&D 2nd Edition games. Especially interested in acquiring a second DM. Please contact: Jim Wyman, 9 Sullivan St., Keene, NH 03431-2034. 603-352-7437.

South Dakota Several gamers in the Black Hills are looking to start a regional gaming, science fiction, and fantasy club. Ask for Steve at 605-642-3316, Mike at 605- 642-7428, or Jon at 605-343-1011. Or write to: The Village, 915 Ames, Spearfish, SD 57783.

Texas I am an AD&D game veteran looking for a gaming group. I am particularly interested in the DRAGONLANCE® saga and in collecting DRAGONLANCE saga memorabilia. I also collect Japanese cartoons. I'd like to join a club, and am willing to learn new games. Please write Tom Conlon, 16314 Sunset Valley Dr., Dallas, TX 75248.

General Wanted: pen pals interested in the AD&D game, D&D® game, MERPS, GAMMA WORLD™ game, Warhammer, and Warhammer 40K. I am always willing to learn a new game. I'm also looking for gamers in the Seligman, MO area. Please write: Allen Beck, R.T. 1 Box 966, Seligman, MO 65745.

General Players needed to playtest a PBM game. For details write: Jimmy Nugent, 512 N. Resident St., Wharton, TX 77488.

General I'm looking for players interested in starting a serious PBM campaign for the AD&D game. All ages are welcome, but space is limited. For details send a SASE to Jon McDonald, 5112 Webster St., Omaha, NE 68132.

General I'm an 11-year-old male GM and player. I play the D&D® game, AD&D game, and Cyborg Commando. If you want a pen pal, please write Stephen Mc Sweeney, 15 Mountain View Ln., Garnerville, NY 10923.

General I'm a DM starting a PBM world and I need players. Run your favorite character or design a new one. I'm using the original AD&D game rules and the *Unearthed Arcana* book; all races and classes allowed. I will answer all letters promptly. Contact Louis Gagliano, 1037 Bross, Longmont, CO 80501.

General Character Portraits and shirts handpainted. Your art or mine. Send a SASE for more information. Sher Wolfe, 1685 S. Colorado Blvd. #S-236, Denver, CO 80222 303-753-0928 (callers please note that I'm on Mountain Standard Time).

General *Indiana Jones* game for sale: I have the rule book, cardboard cut outs, and two adventures, IJ1 *Temple of Doom* and IJ5 *Nepal Nightmare*, both with poster-sized maps. Call David at 603-538-6345, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

General Wanted: Any Chill RPG adventure or supplement, used or new condition. Send title, asking price, and condition to Frank Troise, 1 Morgan Lane, Staten Island, NY 10314.

General I'm looking for secondhand copies of the old *Metamorphosis Alpha* and first edition GAMMA WORLD® games. These must be in good condition to receive a good price. If you have these games and are willing to sell, contact: Michael Kedziora, Box 6684, APO New York, NY 09194.

General For sale: a large selection of popular games in new to excellent condition. Reasonable prices. For a list send a large SASE to: Richard Iorio II, 1817 1st Ave., Grafton, WI 53024.

General Wanted: Things sourcebook for Chill, POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #34, Autoduel Champions (complete) for Car Wars, a grail, a golden fleece, and an ark. I'm willing to pay relatively unreasonable prices for these items if they are in fairly good condition. Send information to: David KW Derksen, 487 Bonner Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R2G 1B4.